

A History of  
PAHRUMP,  
NEVADA

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NEVADA

Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Press  
TONOPAH NEVADA

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A History of Pahrump, Nevada  
by Robert D. McCracken

Second printing 1992  
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Published in 1990 by  
Nye County Press P.O. Box 3070  
Tonopah, Nevada 89049

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 90-060552  
ISBN: 1-878138-51-0

Design by Paul Cirac, White Sage Studios, Virginia City, Nevada  
Printed in the United States of America

To my mother, Martha, and to all the women  
who made homes for their families on the  
Nevada desert

In appreciation for their unwavering support  
and encouragement for the Nye County Town  
History Project:

Nye County Commissioners

Robert "Bobby" N. Revert

Joe S. Garcia, Jr.

Richard L. Carver

Barbara J. Raper

and Nye County Planning Consultant

Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr.

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## Preface

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of the overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that although much of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region—stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County—remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890 most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another twenty years.

The great mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), and Rhyolite (1904) represent the last major flowerings of what might be called the Old West. Pahrump Valley did not have a paved road until 1953 and no publicly supplied electricity until 1963. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County—perhaps more than any other region of the West—remains close to the American frontier. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found there. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area is also visible in the relatively undisturbed condition of the natural environment, most of it essentially untouched by humans.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past and the scarcity of written sources on local history (especially after 1920); the Nye County Board of Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) in 1987. The NCTHP is an effort to systematically collect and preserve the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. The interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. Complete sets of these photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

The oral histories and photo collections, as well as written sources, served as the basis for the preparation of this volume on Pahrump history. It is one of a series on the history of all major Nye County communities.

In a real sense this volume, like the others in the NCTHP series, is the result of a community effort. Before the oral interviews were conducted, a number of local residents provided advice on which community members had lived in the area the longest, possessed and recalled information not available to others, and were available and willing to participate.

Because of time and budgetary constraints, many highly qualified persons were not interviewed.

Following the interviews, the participants gave even more of their time and energy: They elaborated upon and clarified points made during the taped interviews; they went through family albums and identified photographs; and they located books, dates, family records, and so forth. During the preparation of this manuscript, a number of community members were contacted, sometimes repeatedly (if asked, some would probably readily admit that they felt pestered), to answer questions that arose during the writing and editing of the manuscript. Moreover, once the manuscript was in more or less final form, each individual who was discussed for more than a paragraph or two in the text was provided with a copy of his or her portion of the text and was asked to check that portion for errors. Appropriate changes were then made in the manuscript.

Once that stage was completed, several individuals in the Pahrump area were asked to review the entire manuscript for errors of omission and commission. At each stage, this quality-control process resulted in the elimination of factual errors and raised our confidence in the validity of the contents.

The author's training as an anthropologist, not a historian (although the difference between the disciplines is probably less than some might suppose), likely has something to do with the community approach taken in the preparation of this volume. It also may contribute to the focus on the details of individuals and their families as opposed to a general description of local residents and their communities. Perhaps this volume, as well as a concern with variability among individuals and their contribution to a community, reflects an "ethno-graphic," as opposed to a "historical," perspective on local history. In the author's view, there is no such thing as "the history" of a community; there are many histories of a community. A community's history is like a sunrise—the colors are determined by a multitude of factors, such as the time of year, weather, and point of view. This history of Pahrump was greatly determined by the input of those who helped produce it. If others had participated, both the subjects treated and the relative emphasis the subjects received would have been, at least, somewhat different. Many basic facts would, of course, remain much the same—such things as names, dates, and locations of events. But the focus, the details illustrating how facts and human beings come together, would have been different. History is, and always will remain, sensitive to perspective and impressionistic, in the finest and most beautiful sense of the word.

A shorter, generously illustrated (with more than 60 photographs) companion to this volume, titled Pahrump: A Valley Waiting to Become a City, is also available through Nye County Press. Virtually all written material presented in that volume is contained in this one. Those who would like to see pictures of Pahrump's history should consult that version.

I hope that readers enjoy this history of Pahrump, Nevada. Pahrump is an interesting and scenic place, brimming with a frontier community's enthusiasm for the future. A beautiful desert valley with vast land and water resources, clean air and plenty of sunshine, it stands on the threshold of its destiny: to become a lovely city.

Robert D. McCracken

## Acknowledgments

This volume was produced under the Nye County Town History Project, initiated by the Nye County Board of Commissioners. Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert "Bobby" N. Revert, and Pat Mankins; Mr. Revert and Mr. Garcia, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy, provided advice and input regarding the conduct of the research, and constantly served as a sounding board as production problems were worked out. This volume would never have been possible without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

Thanks go to the participants of the Nye County Town History Project, especially those from Pahrump and the Pahrump area, who kindly provided much of the information; thanks, also, to residents from Pahrump and throughout southern Nevada—too numerous to mention by name—who provided assistance and historical information.

Jean Charney and Jean Stoess did the word processing and, along with Gary Roberts, Maire Hayes, and Jodie Hansen, provided editorial comments, review, and suggestions. Alice Levine and Michelle Starika edited several drafts of the manuscript and contributed measurably to this volume's scholarship and readability. Alice Levine also served as production consultant, and Michelle Starika prepared the index. Paul Cirac, who was raised in central Nevada, was responsible for design and layout. Gretchen Loeffler and Bambi McCracken assisted in numerous secretarial and clerical duties.

Harry Ford, M. Kent "Tim" Hafen, Jackie Hafen, Deke Lowe, and Celesta Lowe, who know more about Pahrump history than anybody, kindly critiqued several drafts of the manuscript; their assistance and support have been invaluable. Roland Wiley also critiqued a draft of the manuscript. Noella Benvenuti, registrar, San Bernardino County Museums, Redlands, California, provided access to the museum's data file on the Yount family. Kevin Rafferty and Lynda Blair, from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Environmental Research Center, provided helpful suggestions on the section concerning the archaeology of Native Americans in the Pahrump-Las Vegas area. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout, and Tom King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada, Reno, served as consulting oral historian. Susan Jarvis of Special Collections, James R. Dickinson Library, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, assisted greatly with research conducted at that institution. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All aspects of production of this volume were supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, Grant No. DE-FG08- 89NV10820. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOE. Any errors or deficiencies are, of course, the author's responsibility.

R. D. M.

## CHAPTER 1

### Prologue: The Land and Early Inhabitants

The availability of water has always determined the possibilities of life in the arid American West. For untold thousands of years, the magnificent springs located in the Pahrump Valley of Nevada have formed the basis of a community consisting of numerous plant and animal species. For what might be as much as 10,000 years, the springs have served to sustain a variety of cultures and ways of life, and in recent years they have made possible the beginnings of the growth of a modern city. This volume attempts to briefly tell the story of the many different groups and individuals who have lived in the Pahrump Valley and the ways in which they have used its water and land.

#### The Physical Setting

The Pahrump Valley is located in Nye and Clark counties, Nevada, and Inyo and San Bernardino counties, California, and extends over approximately 1050 square miles. The valley is bounded on the north and east by the great Spring Mountains massif; Mount Sterling, elevation 8217 feet, lies to the north and Charleston Peak, elevation 11,918 feet, to the east (Harrill, 1986:2). The Pahrump Valley lies in the same relationship to the west side of the Spring Mountains as does the Las Vegas Valley to the east side (Venstrom, 1932:79). The Resting Spring Range and the Nopah Range, whose highest point is 6415 feet, form the valley's borders to the west; the Kingston Range, with Kingston Peak at an elevation of 7320 feet, forms the southern border (Harrill, 1986:2).

Much of the valley floor is between 2500 and 2800 feet above sea level, making a maximum topographic relief of more than 9000 feet between the valley floor and the mountaintop (Harrill, 1986:3). Cultivated lands lie between 2400 and 2700 feet (Venstrom, 1932:79). Large alluvial fans are present on the southwest side of the Spring Mountains, heading high into the canyons leading from Charleston Peak (Harrill, 1986:2). Valley soil is alluvial in character and almost entirely composed of silt and clay, down to the ground-water level. The clay beds are believed to have been laid down by a lake, or playa, that once occupied part of the valley (Venstrom, 1932:81).

Water has been the focal point of the history of Pahrump Valley since its first occupation by human beings. Large, free-flowing springs were present on the lower aprons of the Pahrump and Manse fans when Europeans first arrived. Water in the valley's aquifer comes entirely from precipitation; nearly all is from moisture deposited on the west slope of the Spring Mountains—there is no loss of water from under-flow. Average annual precipitation in southern Nevada is between 4 and 8 inches, yet 8 to 16 inches fall in the Spring Mountains, with even more precipitation at higher elevations. Storm fronts come from the west during the winter and from the Gulf Coast during the summer months (T. Turner, 1978:29). In places where near-surface water occurs, some may be lost through evaporation and transpiration (Maxey and Jameson, 1948:116).

The Pahrump Valley is a ground-water basin underlain and enclosed on all sides by impermeable bedrock. Between 1916 and 1937, an estimated 9600 acre-feet of water were discharged from the aquifer per year, most of it from springs. Over 7000 acre-feet of this discharge took place in the vicinity of the Pahrump Ranch and most of the remainder in the Manse Ranch area. Approximately 4400 acre-feet flowed from Bennett's Spring on the Pahrump Fan in 1946. Between 1937 and 1946 a number of wells were drilled in the valley. By 1946, 17,500 acre-feet per year were being discharged. The total discharge from the vicinity of the Pahrump Ranch in 1946 was about 7600 acre-feet per year. In the vicinity of the Manse Ranch (where the majority of the wells had been drilled), 9700 acre-feet of water were discharged in 1946—more than three-fourths from wells (Maxey and Jameson, 1948:116).

The west side of the Spring Mountains is characterized by greater aridity than the east slopes, which discharge into the Las Vegas Valley (Maxey and Jameson, 1948:116). For example, juniper and pinion pine and associated plants do not ordinarily grow below an altitude of 6000 feet on the Pahrump side of the Spring Mountains, and fir and pine are ordinarily not found below 8000 feet; yet on the Las Vegas side of the mountains juniper and pinion pine extend to as low as 5000 feet and fir and white pine are found at 7100 feet (Maxey and Jameson, 1948:117).

It is thought that precipitation below 6500 feet does not contribute appreciably to the recharge of Pahrump Valley ground-water resources. Sixty-one thousand acres of watershed between the altitudes of 6500 and 8500 feet and 19,700 acres above the 8500-foot elevation contribute to this recharge. Drainage areas are divided about equally between the Pahrump Fan in the north and the Manse Fan and the southern part of the valley. The annual ground-water increment to Pahrump Valley is approximately 23,000 acre-feet, with about 12,000 acre-feet for recharging the Pahrump Fan and about 11,000 acre-feet available for the Manse Fan and the south part of the valley (Maxey and Jameson, 1948:117).

The Pahrump Valley is several degrees cooler than the Las Vegas Valley (which in turn is cooler than the Moapa Valley). Maximum temperatures in Pahrump are about the same as in Las Vegas, but lower minimums in all months result in a greater range of temperatures, later springs, earlier fall frosts, and shorter growing seasons (Venstrom, 1932:79). Light frosts usually occur in the valley between the months of November and March.

## Ancient Climate in the Pahrump Valley

Researchers have attempted to reconstruct the ancient climate of the Las Vegas Valley. Since the Pahrump and Las Vegas valleys are close to each other and similar in many respects, it is reasonable to assume that conditions present in the Las Vegas Valley in former times also were found in the Pahrump Valley.

Climate in the Pahrump Valley in previous eras had been at times both wetter and drier than it is today. Over 15,000 years ago, it is likely that a large lake existed at the site of the dry lake bed in the Pahrump Valley. From about 32,000 years ago until 22,000 years ago, the valley floor was a woodland area covered by juniper and pinion pine, and the climate was colder and wetter. Cattails probably grew in the shallow water around the lake's margins and woolly mammoths and camels were perhaps present (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:29). From about 14,000 to 13,000 years ago, juniper and sagebrush were found on the valley floor; mammoths, camels,

horses, dire wolves, and other large, extinct animals could have been present. It is around this time that man may have appeared (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:29).

Around 12,000 years ago, the juniper-sagebrush community on the valley floor was probably replaced by sagebrush-shadscale community as a warming and drying trend began. Large animals that had previously roamed in the valley became extinct. Human beings were definitely present in the valley at this time. By 7000 years ago, the valley was very similar to the present lower elevations of the Mojave Desert and much drier than it is now. Then a gradual cooling trend began, along with some increase in precipitation. These changes, along with the development of modern settlements and ground-water pumping, brought the valley to its present climate and environmental state (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:30). Again, it should be emphasized that this summary is based on data from the Las Vegas Valley and may not be entirely applicable to the Pahrump Valley.

## The First Human Occupants of the Pahrump Valley

The first phase of human occupation of the Las Vegas-Pahrump areas has been designated the Tule Springs phase, named for the archaeological site at Tule Springs, located just north of Las Vegas on the east side of the Spring Mountains. This phase, which lasted from about 13,000 to 10,000 years ago, is usually considered the Paleo-Indian, or Big Game Hunter, phase of Nevada prehistory. These early inhabitants produced the Clovis projectile point, some of which have been found on the west side of the Las Vegas Valley. The Clovis point producers are thought to have subsisted on the mammoths, camels, horses, and other big game that roamed the shores of the lake. Additionally, they probably gathered many plants and hunted small game (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:42-44). They are thought to have occupied large base camps in the lowlands, where band-sized groups lived. Kill sites probably were established in adjoining lowlands and the groups occupied camps at higher altitudes for hunting and gathering activities. They also might have occupied camps in the mid-altitudes where bands or families gathered prior to moving to the lowland camps or to camps at higher elevations (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:44).

The period between 9000 and 7500 years ago has been called the Lake Mojave phase (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:45). Archaeological sites from this phase are commonly found on extinct lake terraces in the Mojave Desert area and a variety of other locales. Lake Mojave and Silver Lake style points as well as scrapers, borers, small-flake knives, crescents, and other flaked tools have been found from this era (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:45). In its early years, this phase may have been associated with the exploitation of marshy environments and grass-lands, with a shift toward more nomadic settlement patterns as the great lakes dried and the large mammals disappeared. Previous to the mid-1980s, little evidence for the Lake Mojave phase had been found in southern Nevada; most evidence consisted of projectile points found in central and western Clark County on the surface of the ground (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:146). Since 1983, a number of archaeological sites of this age have been recorded in the Las Vegas Valley, greatly augmenting our understanding of this period (Rafferty, 1986).

The Archaic, or Desert Culture, phase of southern Nevada's prehistory is thought to have begun following the end of the Lake Mojave period about 7500 years ago. Occupants at this

time were nomadic hunters and gatherers exploiting a variety of resource zones on a seasonal basis. They moved from the valley floor to mountaintops with the changing seasons. Climate during the Desert Culture phase was notably warmer and drier.

Around 5000 years ago, the climate in southern Nevada and the Great Basin began to cool, and there was somewhat greater precipitation—but not enough to provide for a return of the large lakes. However, this trend was not consistent, and there were wide fluctuations between wet and dry cycles. (The lower limits of the juniper-pinen pine forests, for example, have fluctuated more than 3200 feet in elevation during the past 5000 years [Rafferty and Blair, 1984:48].) Archaeological sites from this phase are found at a variety of elevations and physiographic features in southern Nevada, including valley springs, mountain foothills, desert zones, well-watered canyons, and higher elevation juniper-pinen pine zones (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:48-49). Many rock shelters in southern Nevada were occupied (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:51). The Mule Springs rock shelter, located on the west side of the Spring Mountains not far from State Highway 160, is an example of a cave that was put to use (T. Turner, 1978:86). Semipermanent camps may have existed on the valley floors during this period (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:49). Many researchers believe that the Native American occupants of the Pahrump Valley in this era, as well as their neighbors in the Las Vegas Valley and the Moapa area, were the ancestors of the Southern Paiute, who occupied much of southern Nevada at the time of the first white contact and whose descendants remain in the Pahrump Valley and Las Vegas area today (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:55).

The next era in the archaeological history of the Pahrump Valley, the Virgin Anasazi phase, began about 2000 years ago and lasted until about A.D. 1200. The Anasazi are the ancestors of the modern Pueblo Indians, including the Hopi Indians in northern Arizona and the Pueblo Indians who live along the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico. The Anasazi moved into southern Nevada about the time of the birth of Christ and occupied areas along the Colorado River and in the regions of the Virgin and Muddy rivers. It has been suggested that the movement of the Anasazi into southern Nevada was associated with a population expansion. Their further expansion into the Las Vegas Valley and southern California about A.D. 900 coincides with the development of a large trading network engaged in by the Anasazi at that time, perhaps headquartered at Chaco Canyon in northern New Mexico and extending to the coast of California and as far as Mesoamerica (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:55-86; Rafferty, 1989).

The Anasazi entry into extreme southern Nevada and southern California is believed to have been associated with the extraction of turquoise from mines located not far from the present location of Hoover Dam near Crescent Pass and the Halloran Springs area. In addition, the mining of salt played a role in the trade as well. Some experts believe that the intrusion of the Anasazi did not threaten the peoples living in the region—presumably ancestors of modern Southern Paiute—and that, in fact, the Paiute and Anasazi developed a symbiotic relationship in which the Paiute may have worked for the Anasazi as laborers (Blair, 1988). The arrival of the Anasazi may well have been seen as an advantage by the Paiute because it represented a new source of mates and trade and possible exchange of information helpful to their survival (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:62-63).

Anasazi trading outposts such as those in southern Nevada may have been self-sufficient, and there is some evidence of a hierarchical ranking of residents and of authoritative figures such as chiefs (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:74). The local Paiute, in addition to possibly

performing labor for the Anasazi, provided them with wild foods, game, and tanned skins in trade for maize, cotton, and pottery. Perhaps the local residents learned, or at least improved on, agricultural techniques while in association with the Anasazi (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:81).

For this span of 1200 years, artifacts from the Anasazi and the original occupants of the Las Vegas-Pahrump Valley area are found in close association. There is evidence of a great kiva at Lost City, now under the waters of Lake Mead. There is also evidence that the Anasazi may have traded in cotton and textiles; cotton bolls and textiles have been recovered from pueblo sites in the area (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:68-77). About A.D. 500, the bow and arrow entered the area and characteristic arrowheads began to be produced in southern Nevada (Blair, 1988). Shell in very large quantities from the Pacific Coast was found at Lost City (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:77). Additionally, around A.D. 700 there was an increase in moisture and the introduction of a new variety of maize (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:72-73). The Pahrump-Las Vegas area was very likely a trading outpost for a pan-southwestern exchange in turquoise and other resources (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:70).

Approximately 800 years ago, the Anasazi abandoned the Pahrump-Las Vegas area. Researchers disagree about the reasons for this abandonment. There is evidence of a major drought about 800 years ago (A.D. 1150), which might have made agriculture more difficult by reducing the flow of water in the Muddy and Virgin river areas. There may have been overexploitation of wild resources such as agave and other foods (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:84). It has also been suggested that there was a collapse in the pan-southwestern trading system. In Mesoamerica the disruption and fall of the Toltec Empire occurred around A.D. 1168, and Chaco Canyon in New Mexico underwent severe depopulation and was abandoned by the early 1200s (Rafferty and Blair, 1984:86). With the collapse of the trading network, there was little reason for the Anasazi to maintain their southern Nevada outpost, especially in the face of reduced resources produced by drought, and thus they abandoned the area.

An alternative hypothesis that some scholars favor suggests that about the time of the abandonment of southern Nevada by the Anasazi, the ancestors of the modern Numic speakers, the linguistic group to which the Southern Paiute belong, entered the area and, in effect, drove out a group of earlier inhabitants who spoke a language we are unable to identify today (perhaps an extinct language or perhaps a language spoken by some neighboring group). This explanation fits with linguistic evidence indicating that the Numic speaking peoples, including the Southern Paiute, Shoshone, and Utes, entered the Great Basin from southern California approximately 1000 or less years ago (Lamb, 1958; Bettinger and Baumhoff, 1982). However, for counter arguments see Aikens and Witherspoon (1986).

## The Southern Paiute

The last stage in the archaeological history of the Native Americans of Pahrump Valley is known as the Paiute phase, which began about 800 years ago. Researchers believe that the present-day Southern Paiute are descended from people who have lived in the southern Nevada region for at least the past 800 years. Though the Paiute have often been characterized as "poor" and bearers of a "simple" culture, the fact is that they developed a way of life admirably suited to the land and its resources. The Southern Paiute occupied a portion of south-eastern California, southern Nevada, southwestern Utah, and northern Arizona (Kelly and

Fowler, 1986:369). Their language belongs to the Southern Numic branch of the Uto-Aztecán linguistic family (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:368). Within historical times, sixteen identifiable Southern Paiute groups, or bands, existed, residing in the area bounded by Navajo Mountain in southern Utah to Sevier Lake in south-western Utah to the Amargosa Range, located west of Ash Meadows in California, and to Blythe, California, on the Arizona-California border (see map, Kelly and Fowler, 1986:369).

Among the Southern Paiute there was no overall tribal organization, and each of the sixteen bands had its own territory and was, for the most part, economically self-sufficient. The Southern Paiute were what anthropologists call hunters and gatherers; that is to say, they subsisted by foraging for wild plants and animals. In the case of some Southern Paiute, hunting and gathering may have been supplemented by agriculture, perhaps learned from close association with the Anasazi. Because the bands occupied a wide variety of environments, they differed somewhat in the foods they exploited (Kelly and Fowler, 1986: 368-370).

Southern Paiute occupying the Pahrump Valley were part of the Las Vegas band. Their name for themselves is Nipakanticimi, which means "people of Charleston Peak" (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:395). The homeland of the Las Vegas Paiute encompassed an area bound by Cottonwood Island and El-dorado Canyon on the east, Ash Meadows and Indian Springs on the north, the Black Mountains and Avawatz Mountains on the west, and Old Dad Mountains and Clipper Mountains on the south. Their neighbors included the Moapa Paiute on the northeast; the Walapai on the east across the Colorado River; the Mojave, the Chemehuevi (another band of Southern Paiute), and the Serrano on the south; the Vanyumi on the west; and the Shoshone to the north (see map in Alley, 1977: opposite page 1).

In 1871, First Lieutenant George M. Wheeler of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was assigned to explore portions of the U.S. territory lying south of the Central Pacific Railroad, embracing parts of eastern Nevada and Arizona. The object of the exploration was to improve topographical knowledge of the country, prepare accurate maps, and discuss the numbers, habits, and dispositions of Indians who lived in the territory (Wheeler, 1872).

In that same year, Lieutenant Daniel W. Lockwood, operating under orders from Lieutenant George M. Wheeler, traveled from Camp Independence near Owens Lake in California to Tucson. He encountered Paiute at Cottonwood Springs and Las Vegas and estimated that their combined numbers at the two sites was about 200 (Euler, 1966:77-78). In that same expedition, on July 3, 1871, Second Lieutenant D. A. Lyle was placed in charge of a detachment with orders to travel from Belmont, located in central Nevada, to Camp Independence, and to make several reconnaissance missions east of Camp Independence. Lyle's report of the journey appears as an appendix in Wheeler's report. Interestingly, at one point the detachment seems to have been very close to the outcroppings in the San Antonio Mountains which, almost thirty years later, would be discovered by Jim Butler and would lead to the development of Tonopah. In southern Nye County, Lyle wrote:

Two days' hard marching brought our worn-out train to Ash Meadows, where we found plenty of excellent grass and water, the latter from warm springs. Very little wood here. To reach this point we had to cross the Funeral Mountains, a range quite high and steep, and the Amargosa Desert, through which, for miles, the dry bed of the river of the name, meanders southward. At this point we lay for a few days while you pushed forward to a rendezvous camp and sent forage, of which we stood in great need. I then moved southward and crossed a low

range into another sandy and gravelly desert, (Pah-rimp Desert,) which extends south for miles, and skirts the Spring Mountain Range. This desert contains several beautiful little oases, the principal one being at Pah-rimp Springs, at which point are located quite a number of Pah-Ute Indians, very friendly and quite intelligent. These Indians raise corn, melons, and squashes. Great quantities of wild grapes were found around these springs. From here, another day's march brought us to Stump Spring, on the old California emigrant-road. This road we followed to the rendezvous camp at Cottonwood Springs, Nevada, crossing the Spring Mountain Range, through an excellent pass near Mountain Spring, where we found plenty of wood, grass, and water (Wheeler, 1872:84).

At another point, he noted:

The Pah-Utes in Pah-rimp Valley, and around Cottonwoods and Las Vegas, raise, in addition, corn, melons, squashes, and gather large quantities of wild grapes which grow abundantly near the springs. They are quite intelligent, and were very friendly. Virtue is almost unknown among them and syphilitic diseases very common (Wheeler, 1872:89).

Like all Southern Paiute, members of the Las Vegas band lived a seminomadic way of life and moved about in their territory as food resources became available. They lived and traveled in small, flexible groups with the family as the basic unit of social organization. Sometimes a single family lived alone in an isolated spot. At other times, several families congregated at a large water source. Camps occupied for any length of time were always associated with springs and sources of flowing water. Plants gathered by the Las Vegas band of Paiute included pine nuts, mesquite beans, screw beans, Indian spinach, agave, berries of many varieties, and grass seeds of many kinds. They hunted animals such as rabbits, small rodents, desert tortoises, big horn sheep, deer, and many varieties of birds, including quail (Alley, 1977:3). The Las Vegas Paiute used poison arrows. The poison was produced by having a rattlesnake bite a piece of deer's liver, which was buried in the ground until it became putrid. It was then removed from the ground and allowed to dry and, when steeped in water, was rubbed on arrows (Euler, 1966:67).

The families harvested foods as they ripened. They had detailed and intimate knowledge of their resources and knew where foods would be available at a given time of year. They stored foods, particularly pine nuts, for the winter. Men usually were responsible for hunting, and women tended to focus their activities on the collection of plant foods. The Charleston Mountains were said to be one of two sites producing the best pine nuts in the vast territory occupied by the Southern Paiute. Pine nuts from other areas were said to be "greasy" but nevertheless were extensively utilized (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:370).

In addition to hunting and gathering, the Southern Paiute practiced agriculture around springs and streams. A small garden might cover an acre, with larger plots jointly maintained by relatives. Sometimes ditch irrigation systems were built. Red and white corn were commonly grown by the Southern Paiute but yellow maize was not reported among the Las Vegas group (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:371).

The Southern Paiute occupied closely grouped dwellings made from brush and tree limbs and "lived under the trees" in hot weather (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:371). The Southern Paiute's basic dress was a double apron made of skin or vegetable fiber. Skin clothing, other

than poncholike shirts or capes for both sexes, was not aboriginal (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:373). The chief craft was the manufacture of baskets, which were used for winnowing, parching, and beating of seeds, and as water jugs when coated with pinon pitch (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:375). Men tanned hides using the brains and marrow from the spinal cord of the animal as tanning agents. The Las Vegas Paiute produced pottery (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:375).

There was no central political control or organization among the Southern Paiute, who were a notably passive and peaceful people. Most large economic clusters had a head man who acted more as an adviser than an authority (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:380-381). Little is known of the Paiute world-view. In their coyote tales, the coyote and even Wood, Water, and Salt possessed human attributes (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:385). Illness was attributed to the intrusion of foreign objects into the body caused by a malevolent shaman or ghost (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:383). The dead were mourned by their relatives with a Mourning, or Cry, Ceremony held three months to a year after the death. Many foods were consumed and goods distributed during such infrequent ceremonies (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:383).

Young people married early and it was immaterial if marriage took place prior to the girl's first menses. Most marriages were monogamous; however, men sometimes took multiple wives, often sisters (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:377, 380). There were no rules regarding in which village the newlyweds would reside (Steward, 1970:185).

The Las Vegas-area Paiute loved to travel, and they made journeys of great distances. Men from the Las Vegas and Chemehuevi groups traveled to the Pacific Coast "just to look around" and to obtain shell. On rare occasions they would journey to the Hopi villages in northern Arizona, several hundred miles away, with a round-trip taking about two months. The Southern Paiute always traveled on foot (Kelly and Fowler, 1986:377). They rejected the horse when it was introduced to the area, believing that the animal was too much trouble to feed and was, furthermore, damaging to the environment.

Pahrump Indians gathered pine nuts in the Spring Mountains and families traveled alone or in small groups to pine-nut tracts, which were owned by men and passed on to their sons. Women gathered nuts on their husbands' lands (Steward, 1970:182-183). They remained at these tracts until snow made collection impossible, and they then returned to the winter village in the valley, with perhaps some members remaining in the mountains (Steward, 1970:182). At Manse and Pahrump, cultivated plots were small and scattered. Apparently there was not sufficient land for all, and those without land traded wild food for cultivated food (Steward, 1970:183). Mesquite and screw beans were gathered in considerable quantities and stored for future use (Steward, 1970:183). Mountain sheep were hunted in the mountains between the Amargosa River and the Pahrump Valley, and in the Funeral Mountains; these animals were formerly numerous. A hunter was obliged to share large game with his neighbors (Steward, 1970:184).

## Origin of the Word "Pahrump"

In 1872, George M. Wheeler described the "Pah-rimp Desert and the Pah-rimp Springs," at which resided "quite a number of Pah-Ute Indians" (Carlson, 1974:185). A number of meanings for the word Pahrump have been suggested, including "water-stone" from the Southern Paiute pah, meaning "water," and timpi, meaning "stone," modified phonetically to

rimpi or rumpi; Parumpaiats, a Southern Paiute Indian band from in or near the Moapa Valley; or "Great Spring," "water mouth," "big flow of water," "big orifice," or "cave from which water flows," from Southern Paiute (Carlson, 1974:185). Native American residents in the Pahrump Valley have suggested that the word has no meaning—that it is a name whose only reference for the local Paiute Indians was the Pahrump Spring (Lynch, 1988). Anthropologists and historians have found that names of physiographic features that are easily identifiable as being named for people, historic events, or for their resemblance to familiar objects are most often found where occupants of an area are relative newcomers. Names that appear independent of objects they might resemble or to historic events are most often found where occupants have resided in the area for very long periods of time.

### Chief Tecopa

The most famous Southern Paiute "chief" was Tecopa, who was probably born about 1815 in the Las Vegas area and died in Pahrump in 1904. He was a leader for the Ash Meadows and Pahrump region (Steward, 1970:185; "Indian Pow-wow...", 1905). Tecopa's life spanned a period of tumultuous change for the Paiute. He is reported to have first seen whites at Indian Springs when some men who called themselves "mountain men" stopped to rest their horses and secure food for their journey to the west. One is said to have been a mean-looking individual with one leg carved out of a stump of a tree whom the others called "Pegleg Smith," a notorious trapper and horse thief (C. Lowe, 1971:3). Tecopa's residence was at the Pahrump Spring, and he was the pakwinavi of Southern Paiute villages at Pahrump, Tecopa, Horse Thief Springs in the Kingston Range, and Potosi Spring (Lingenfelter, 1986:22). A pakwinavi, or "big talker," was a kind of regional chief whose official function was to organize rabbit drives and the fall festival—the large communal gathering among surrounding communities following the pine-nut harvest. These ceremonies lasted for several days and included a circle dance, feasting, gambling, and a Mourning Ceremony (Lingenfelter, 1986:18). Though Tecopa means "wildcat," Chief Tecopa had a reputation as a peacemaker; for many years, he tried to convince tribal members that killing and stealing were not productive, especially when white men, who had guns and far outnumbered the Indians, were affected. The present community of Tecopa is named after this Paiute leader (C. Lowe, 1971:4).

A story that may be apocryphal but that is widely told among old-timers in the Pahrump and Amargosa area, concerns George Montgomery and the information he obtained from Chief Tecopa. George Montgomery was the oldest of three brothers from Canada who were active in the Pahrump-Amargosa area. George was searching for the lost Breyfogle Mine. In the course of his prospecting, he approached Tecopa. "Do you know anything about that country?" Montgomery asked. Tecopa held out his hands. "The same as I know these," he answered.

Tecopa is said to have known where the deposit that Montgomery sought was located, but he spent several days talking to Montgomery before he would admit it. Tecopa extracted a strange price from Montgomery for guiding him to the site: he asked that Montgomery agree to bring him a new suit of clothes every year. The first payment was to be delivered at Pahrump, at which time Tecopa would take Montgomery to the mine. Montgomery is said to have left for Los Angeles, agreeing to meet Tecopa at the Manse Ranch in a month or so. A month later Tecopa is said to have been delighted with the bandmaster's uniform Montgomery chose for

him. History does not record whether Tecopa ever got a second suit of clothes from Montgomery, but he is said to have taken him to the mountains and shown him the location of a gold deposit ("Chief Tecopa...," n.d.). Although the veracity of this story is doubtful, we do know that George Montgomery staked out the Chispa Mine in 1890. Shortly thereafter Tecopa's son John found the rich Johnnie ledge, and the sons of Joseph Yount, a local rancher, found a rich outcropping that became known as the North Belle Mine (Lingenfelter, 1986:189- 190). Tecopa is buried in Pahrump clothed in his plug hat and bandmaster's suit trimmed with red braid ("Indian Powwow...," 1905).

### The Traditional Southern Paiute Way of Life Comes to an End

The Southern Paiute were able to practice their way of life uninfluenced by the lifestyles of the white man until the early nineteenth century. At first, contact with whites was sporadic and traditional Indian ways were for the most part untouched. But these sporadic contacts were followed by a trickle of explorers entering Paiute lands. The explorers, in turn, were followed by the development of trails across Paiute land and then by the coming of hundreds of miners seeking the riches the land held. The miners provided a market for the ranches that were soon established at every available spring in the area. Within the memory of a single individual, such as Chief Tecopa, the wild game in the mountains was reduced in number and the Southern Paiute were displaced from their ancestral camps and garden sites at watering holes such as Manse and Pahrump springs.

With their traditional sources of subsistence compromised, the Indians were forced to become more dependent upon white civilization. They found themselves ensconced in white culture, working as wage laborers in the mines and on the ranches and lacking the freedom to roam the vast area they had so long called home (Hanes, 1982). By 1905 Harsha White, a member of the family that developed the ranch at the Manse Springs, stated that the Paiute Indian population had decreased by 60 percent since 1890, an undoing he attributed to "the white man's whiskey and biscuits and love" ("Indian Powwow ...," 1905).

## CHAPTER 2

### Exploration and Settlement

No one can name the European who first set eyes on the Pahrump Valley. It might have been a Spanish miner or explorer working out of Mexico sometime prior to 1825. One possible candidate is Peter Skene Ogden. Historians believe that, in 1826, Ogden was the second white man to set foot in what is now the state of Nevada. This was fifty years after Spanish missionary Father Francisco Garces crossed into southern Nevada while traveling along the Colorado River searching for a route that would connect Spanish settlements in California and New Mexico. In 1828, Ogden again entered the state from the north, traveling from the Carson Sink past Walker Lake to the state's southernmost tip (Funk, 1982:7L). South of Walker Lake, Ogden and his party are said to have traveled parallel to the present Nevada-California border, eventually reaching the Gulf of California before returning to Oregon (Cline, 1974:93). In doing so, it is conceivable that they viewed the Pahrump Valley.

In his expeditions to southern California in 1826 and 1827, Jedediah Smith followed the Colorado River along Nevada's southernmost border, but there is nothing to suggest that he ever left the river far enough to find the Pahrump Valley (Morgan, 1953). Smith, however, is credited with linking the two arms of a previously unconnected trail between Santa Fe, New Mexico, and California. In 1776, the eastern part of the trail was originally explored by the Dominguez-Escalante Expedition and the western by Father Garces the same year. This became known as the Old Spanish Trail, but may have more appropriately been called the Mexican Trail because the territory it traversed was controlled by Mexico rather than by Spain (Reeder, 1966:9). Four years after the two arms of the trail were linked, the first pack mule trains began making the passage from Santa Fe to southern California (Reeder, 1966:7). One party to traverse the complete trail was the famous Wolfskill-Yount group, which traveled during the winter of 1830-1831 (Reeder, 1966:22-23).

Meanwhile, alternative routes that eliminated the Colorado River portion of the trail were being explored. In 1829, Antonio Armijo, a New Mexico merchant, traveled down the Nevada side of the Colorado River and camped at the Las Vegas Wash. In the meantime, a member of the party, a little-known man named Rafael Rivera, had gone looking for a shortcut that had a water supply (Roske, 1986:21). Rivera re-turned and the party entered the Las Vegas Valley, but opinions differ concerning the shortcut taken. The traditional view (L. Hafen and A. Hafen, 1954) is that the party went to Cottonwood Springs and then over the Spring Mountains and into the Pahrump Valley. A more recent interpretation is that the party headed south across Jean Dry Lake and camped at Goodsprings Valley (Warren, 1974). A later route left the Virgin River near Bunkerville, Nevada, and crossed the Mormon Mesa to the Muddy River. From there it was a 55- to 60-mile journey to Las Vegas. This later became part of the route from Salt Lake to California, known as the Mormon Trail. Although a number of alternate shortcuts across southern Nevada were found, all were limited by the availability of water until the Mojave River was reached (Reeder, 1966:24).

Alternate routes out of Las Vegas usually began west of Las Vegas at Mountain Springs and converged at Bitter Springs about 30 miles from the junction of the trail with the Mojave River (Reeder, 1966:114). The traditional route of the Old Spanish Trail across the Pahrump Valley involved a stop at Stump Springs and another at Resting Spring, also known as Archilleta or Agua de Hernandez (named by Fremont for the head of the party massacred there, whose two survivors he encountered in 1844) (Reeder, 1966:113). From Resting Spring the route went to Amargosa and Salt Creek and on to Bitter Springs. In 1851, Resting Spring was described as having "good feed and water" and travelers were advised to "lay by and rest your animals for the desert" (Reeder, 1966:396). The first wagon route followed the above route, but soon a shortcut developed that bore to the left from Mountain Springs and ran directly to Kingston Springs and then to Bitter Springs (Reeder, 1966:114).

Starting in the early 1820s and lasting until the gold rush, there was a surplus of wild horses in southern California. There were so many they were troublesome and at one time were slaughtered by the thousands. In 1827 horses could be purchased in California for \$10 and sold for \$50 at mountain rendezvous (Reeder, 1966:59). Traders purchased horses and mules in California and drove them east to Santa Fe, making a tidy profit. Trade in livestock was a major factor in the development of the Spanish Trail, which traversed the Pahrump Valley. In addition to legitimate commerce in live-stock, profit was to be made from illegal dealings, which attracted the interest of thieves. Herds of stolen horses moving east on the Spanish Trail were common, but the journey was not without its difficulties. Perhaps the worst leg of the trail was the full 80 miles between the Mojave River and Resting Springs where the next sufficient, good water could be found for stock. This section crossed the southern end of Death Valley and was known as the "*jornada del muerto*," "journey of death." The trail was littered with the bleached bones of dead animals (Lingenfelter, 1986:25).

A party of thieves that roamed the area in 1840 included a trading post operator named Philip F. Thompson from north-western Colorado; Dick Owens (for whom the Owens Valley was named); as well as, legend has it, Bill Williams, Pegleg Smith, Jim Beckwourth, and the Ute Walkara. They stole a herd of horses and mules in southern California that is said to have numbered 3000 and headed up the Spanish Trail. A posse numbering 75 men and 225 horses chased the thieves to Bitter Springs and Resting Spring. However, the thieves successfully drove off the posse's horses, in effect holding the posse hostage until they agreed to abandon the chase. Thompson is said to have sold the last of the stolen herd on the Missouri River. A profit of close to \$100,000 was made on the raid (Lingenfelter, 1986:27-28).

After the Mexican War (1846-1848), the eastern leg of the Old Spanish Trail fell into disuse, and the Mormon Trail, linking Salt Lake City and southern California via Las Vegas and the Pahrump Valley, became an important commercial wagon route, over which increasing amounts of freight were moved (Reeder, 1966:77-79). The discovery of gold in California led to further increases in traffic on the route, as well as to the misadventures of the '49ers in their efforts to find a shortcut to California—some groups became lost in Death Valley. Their successful rescue from Death Valley added to the proliferation of rumors regarding the presence of gold and silver in the Death Valley region. Such rumors, fueled by tales of the Lost Gunsight and Breyfogle mines, resulted in increased exploration, which in turn attracted attention to the outstanding springs in the Pahrump Valley. The boom camps that the miners created provided markets for the ranches that were developed.

Soon contract freight moved over the trail. There was also mail service, which was not without risk to the carriers. William Hyde described an Indian assault at Resting Spring in 1854:

*As we passed along, they [the Indians] began to approach, and our mules became frightened and plunged badly. A pack got loose, and while fixing it, the Indians increased in numbers, close upon us, and commenced shooting arrows. We showed fright, and two or three felt the effects. The mules were thrown into disorder; the mail pack was torn loose, and one of the sacks dropped in the road. Mr. Conger, who had charge of the mail, dismounted, picked it up and passed it to me. As he was dismounting, his mule received an arrow in the knee, which rendered him unmanageable; at the same time each of us received an arrow through the clothes.*

*The other sack falling off, Mr. Hope dismounted, and attempted to place it up on his mule, and remount, but his mule broke away, threw him and the sack, and left him afoot. I dismounted to act as guard, and protect him, when an arrow passed my cheek and entered the cheek of my mule. Mr. James Powell received an arrow in the left hip, causing a serious wound. The pack mules were excited, Mr. Conger's was unmanageable, by the wound in the knee; Mr. Hope's had broke and left. One mail sack was left in the struggle some distance behind, and the Indians gathered it, and a mule belonging to Mr. [next line or two not printed] 40 or 50, and were ranging ahead to occupy a kanyon thro' which we had to pass, designing to stop our progress. Seeing this movement, our only chance of safety was to press forward and get ahead of them. This was accomplished with loss above mentioned.*

*With regard to conduct of Mr. Conger, great praise is due him for his coolness, decision and management in this trying occasion. All was done that could be to save the mail. By this exertion a portion was saved, as well as the party (Reeder, 1966:314-315).*

In 1844, John C. Fremont and an exploration party were moving east up the Spanish Trail from southern California toward Las Vegas. Fremont was accompanied by frontiersmen Kit Carson and Alex Godey. While exploring at the Mojave River they encountered two figures—a man named Andres Fuentes and an eleven-year-old boy named Pablo Hernandez. The two reported that other members of their party had been killed by Paiute at Resting Spring. They said that Fuentes and his wife, Hernandez and his family, and their guide, Santiago Giacome, had been camped at Resting Spring and were planning to wait two weeks or so for a party following behind them. After a time, several Paiute came into camp and seemed friendly. On April 23, the party was surprised when Paiute surrounded the camp and attacked. Fuentes and the boy Pablo were mounted, circling horses at the time. Hoping to rout the attackers, they drove the horses into the Indians, but to no avail, and were forced to flee for their lives. The man and boy rode south along the trail and the following day left the horses at Bitter Springs and continued until they met Fremont's party at Mojave. The next day an exploring party returned to Bitter Springs with the Mexicans to find that the horses had been stolen. Carson and Godey, along with Fuentes, volunteered to pursue the thieves. Fuentes' horse gave out within 20 miles, but Carson and Godey continued. They pursued the Indians into the Kingston Range at Horse Thief Springs (Lingenfelter, 1986:28-30).

On April 26 at dawn they spotted the horses at the Paiute camp; several had already been butchered and were being cooked. Carson and Godey moved as quietly as possible toward the village, until a startled horse gave them away. Then they opened fire on the village.

Godey and Carson charged the lodges and were met with arrows. One arrow passed through Godey's shirt collar, only barely missing his neck. Carson and Godey kept moving, firing with their rifles, and the Indians scattered. The arrows stopped and there was silence. The two white men saw two warriors on the ground who had fallen from shots and a boy trying to escape. They captured the boy and tied him (Lingenfelter, 1986:28-30). They then took out their skinning knives and made "neat incisions around the heads of the fallen men, put their knees to the shoulders of the warriors and with a hand full of hair tugged until the scalps popped loose with a liquid suction sound" (Eagan, 1977:243). As they held the scalps in the air signaling vengeance, one of the scalped warriors jumped to his feet, blood streaming from his head, crying out in pain and shock. An old woman (believed to be the man's mother), looking down from the hillside, screamed as her scalped son was shot. Satisfied that they had taught the Indians a lesson, they returned to Fremont's camp, bloody scalps dangling from Godey's gun (Eagan, 1977:243; Lingenfelter, 1986:29). Returning to Resting Spring, they found that the males in the Mexican party had been killed by the Indians and their bodies mutilated. Carson later found the women's bodies staked to the ground and also mutilated (Lingenfelter, 1986:30). Carson named the Resting Spring "Agua de Hernandez" in honor of the boy's father, but the name did not stick.

In the spring of 1875, two brothers, William D. and Robert D. Brown, headed east from Death Valley toward the Pahrump area. They found an "immense body of splendid ore," silver and lead, just south of Resting Spring on the Old Spanish Trail. They laid out a townsite 6 miles southeast of Resting Spring and christened it Brownsville. They also started a potato and vegetable ranch and fruit orchard at Resting Spring and a sawmill among the yellow pines on Spring Mountain, in anticipation of a boom (Lingenfelter, 1986:137). James Osborne, superintendent of a British mining company in Eureka, Nevada, came to the oasis in the winter of 1875-1876. Osborne was backed by investors from Los Angeles and he purchased a number of mines in the area—including the Noonday and four others, from the Brown brothers. This triggered a rush to Resting Spring and by the spring of 1877 there were 400 men at the site (Lingenfelter, 1986:138-139). Osborne also purchased the Brownsville townsite for \$100, renamed it after Chief Tecopa and began selling lots for \$50 to \$75 each (Lingenfelter, 1986:139). The Tecopa mines boomed for several years and provided a market for the ranchers in the area. When the Browns sold out the Resting Spring Ranch, Phi Lee eventually took over (Lingenfelter, 1986:167).

## Pahrump Becomes Part of Nye County

Territory comprising the future states of Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and portions of Colorado and Wyoming was obtained from Mexico in 1848 through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Mottaz, 1978:27). The area that later became Nevada was apportioned into parts of two territories, the Utah Territory on the north and the New Mexico Territory on the south. The latter included the Pahrump Valley, which lay within Rio Arriba County in New Mexico, one of a number of paper counties created by the Territory of New Mexico in 1852 (Mottaz, 1978:27). A few years later, in 1861, Congress created the Territory of Nevada out of the Utah Territory (Mottaz, 1978:31). The Nevada Territory, however, did not include the southern tip of the state, in which the Pahrump Valley lay; that remained with the New Mexico

Territory. That same year Esmeralda County, including much of present Nye County, was created with a county seat at Aurora (Mottaz, 1978:31). In 1864, Nye was carved out of Esmeralda, but the Pahrump Valley still remained with the New Mexico Territory (Mottaz, 1978:35).

Later in 1864, pressures for statehood built (stemming, to a great extent, from the Republicans' desire to have another antislave state in the Union), and Nevada was admitted to statehood (Elliott, 1973:83-85; Mottaz, 1978:35). The new state, however, did not include the southern tip of present-day Nevada (including the Pahrump Valley); that remained as part of the Arizona Territory, which had been newly created in 1863 (Mottaz, 1978:36-37). By 1865, Rio Arriba County, in which Pahrump was included, was merged into Mojave County in the Arizona Territory, and a short time later Pah Ute County was created out of Mojave, with the county seat at Callville (Mottaz, 1978:33-37). In 1866, Congress authorized the extension of the state of Nevada southward to the Colorado River, and a year later the Nevada Legislature accepted the extension; thus the Pahrump Valley was incorporated into Nye County, where it has remained. Interestingly, the Arizona Territory did not recognize the accession of land to Nevada until 1871 (Mottaz, 1978:37). In 1867, the seat of Nye County was moved from Lone to Belmont (Mottaz, 1978:37); it was moved in 1905 to its present site of Tonopah (Nevada Works Projects Administration, 1940:7).

## The First Settlers in the Pahrump Valley

Some of the first white men to settle the Death Valley region, called "White Arabs" by one early author (Spears, 1892:55), did so during the Civil War to escape the draft or to escape prosecution as deserters from the army. Others were there because there were sheriffs' warrants out for them in other locales (Spears, 1892:55-56).

By the 1870s, the time was ripe for white settlers to begin taking advantage of the water resources in the Pahrump Valley as well as other sites in the area, including the Amargosa and Ash Meadows area, Oasis Valley to the north, and the Las Vegas Valley, where O. D. Gass had settled at the location of the old Mormon Fort some years earlier. The Indians, of course, had long utilized the springs in the Pahrump Valley and the resources that the abundant water nourished.

Mormon Charlie, a progressive Paiute, is credited with starting the first ranch in the Pahrump Valley. He used stock left behind by miners at Potosi and began his ranch at the Manse Springs in the late 1860s (Lingenfelter, 1986:162). Mormon Charlie's ranch at Manse is listed on Wheeler's 1873 map. The same map also gives the position of Charles King's ranch at Ash Meadows. King was a Yankee who had joined the California gold rush and was working as a miner at Timpahute when he joined Wheeler's survey in 1871. Chief Tecopa had a rancheria at Pahrump Springs by 1875 (Lingenfelter, 1986:165-167).

In the spring of 1875, Charles Bennett and his family moved in next to Tecopa at Pahrump Springs and established a ranch (Lingenfelter, 1986:167). Bennett was a man who always seemed willing to try something new. By 1880, he had several hundred acres in crops, with miles of irrigation ditches and fences. He was the first to mechanize in the valley, purchasing a "mammoth, self-binding harvest machine" in the spring of 1880 (Lingenfelter, 1986:169). While owner of the Pahrump Ranch, Bennett thrived, accumulating horses, mules,

and cattle; he had money in a Los Angeles bank. Bennett sold his Pahrump Ranch to Aaron and Rosie Winters for \$20,000 in 1882, \$15,000 in cash and the balance in a mortgage (Lingenfelter, 1986:174; Spears, 1982:60, 86).

After selling his ranch, Bennett went into the freighting business. He hauled borax from the Harmony Borax Works and the Eagle Borax Works, owned by William T. Coleman, to the railroad at Mojave (Lingenfelter, 1986:182). In less than a year, by the spring of 1884, he had a total of nine 18-mule teams on the road (Lingenfelter, 1986:182). Coleman, however, did not renew Bennett's contract. He decided to do the hauling himself, and he built 10 large wagons pulled by 18 mules and 2 horses that became famous: the 20-mule team borax wagons (Lingenfelter, 1986:182). Bennett then moved to Encenada in Baja, California, which he had heard was booming. The "boom" was of short duration, and Bennett started a ranch near Todos Santos Bay, where he spent the rest of his life and where his sons were still residing in the late 1950s.

Aaron Winters has been described as a "chubby little man with a round, ruddy face and a bushy goatee, a middle-aged midwesterner and a former hotel keeper of failing fortune" (Lingenfelter, 1986:174). He and his wife, Rosie, were living on a small ranch in Ash Meadows when a man named Henry Spiller stopped at their place for the night. Spiller showed Winters how to test for borax by pouring sulfuric acid on borax salts, then adding alcohol, and setting the mixture afire. A green flame would indicate the salts were borax. Winters remembered seeing some salts in Death Valley similar to those Spiller had shown him. After Spiller left, he and Rosie returned to the site he remembered, which was located a few miles north of Furnace Creek in Death Valley. That night they tested their samples and Winters reportedly exclaimed, "She burns green, Rosie! We're rich, by God!" (Lingenfelter, 1986:174). Winters staked out 27 claims on the property and sold them for \$20,000 to William T. Coleman, who was heavily involved in the distribution of borax. Borax was used in the chemical industry and as a laundering agent. With that money Winters bought the Pahrump Ranch from Bennett (Lingenfelter, 1986:174).

Winters' luck did not hold, however. The market for the products produced at the ranch declined. Winters took in partners to try and keep the ranch going. He also turned to prospecting, but all to no avail. In 1887 back taxes took all but a small part of the ranch. Rosie had died of tuberculosis two or three years after they moved to the ranch, and by the turn of the century Winters had lost all his investment and had become "a virtual hermit in the Shadow Mountains" (Lingenfelter, 1986:175; Spears, 1892:56, 60).

Winters definitely killed one man and possibly another one while owner of the Pahrump Ranch. Pahrump ranchers had to make a long, dusty journey to pay their taxes in Belmont, the Nye County seat. Winters was aware of the dangers of such a trip when a person was carrying cash. Expecting trouble, he prepared by putting a worthless pistol in a holster on the dashboard of his buckboard and a first-class Navy revolver under the cushion (Spears, 1892:60). His trip north was uneventful until he neared Belmont. Then two men "got the drop on him" and told him to get down from the buckboard and hand over his cash. This Winters did, with much talk, wobbling and teetering as he moved. The road agents laughed at Winters and became more amused when they saw the gun in the holster on the dashboard. One of the bandits pulled the gun from the holster and turned with a loud jeer to show it to his partner. It was his last mistake. Winters drew the revolver from under the cushion and shot one of the men dead; the

other threw up his hands and begged for mercy. Winters then disarmed the remaining bandit, ordered him to place the corpse of his partner on the buckboard, and walked the one still standing into town under the muzzle of his smoking revolver. Winters, of course, was not charged with the shooting, and he was influential in having the other bandit released. With more trust perhaps than prudence, Winters took the bandit home with him to Pahrump and employed him on the ranch for more than a year (Spears, 1892:61).

At his Pahrump Ranch, Winters operated a liquor store that functioned as a resort for white men and Indians alike. It is said that those seeking a good time would sometimes travel more than 100 miles to the Pahrump Ranch for a "spree" (Spears, 1892:61).

Winters also was a partner with two men named Parks and Ellis in the discovery of the Amargosa borax deposit. The three men split \$5,000. Parks took his share and returned to his home in the East. Ellis stayed on and met with misfortune the next year, 1883. He had a bad reputation, having previously killed a Spaniard in a mining camp. One day a cook from Death Valley, James Center, came to Pahrump to have a good time with his accumulated wages. He got into a poker game with Ellis and the two quarreled over a jackpot of \$1. Center accused Ellis of cheating and Ellis left to get a revolver to avenge the insult. Center grabbed a Henry rifle from behind the bar and went looking for his opponent. Ellis returned, saw Center and ducked behind the wheels of a buckboard. Ellis fired but only hit Center in the fleshy part of the right leg. Center returned the fire and sent a bullet tearing through Ellis' abdomen (Spears, 1892:62). Ellis died two days later, but Center was transported back to the Amargosa Borax Works where the best medical attention available was provided. The superintendent of the borax works, doubling as a physician, drew a silk handkerchief through the wound, dragging out the debris of clothing and dirt left by the shot, and Center recovered (Spears, 1892:62).

## Yount Acquires the Manse Ranch

Mormon Charlie's ranch at Manse Springs was taken over by the Jordan brothers in 1876, and they sold it to Joseph Yount and his family early the next year (Lingenfelter, 1986:167). According to the family Bible, Joseph Yount was born in 1818 and his wife Margaret was born in Knox County, Missouri, in 1834. Joseph Yount was a frontiersman who had served in the Mexican War with General Stephen Kearney (Fisk, 1957). He went to California in 1849 with the gold rush (Doherty, 1974:165). He returned to Missouri in 1853 and married Margaret, with whom he would spend the rest of his life. In 1856, Yount was chosen captain of a train of 100 wagons bound for Oregon (Fisk, 1957). In 1876 he and his family were living in La Grande, Oregon; there he heard of the gold strike at Tombstone, Arizona—he was personally acquainted with its discoverer. Yount decided to go to Tombstone and disposed of his holdings in Oregon. He put together 400 head of cattle, about 30 head of horses, and two covered wagons; in June 1876 he headed south with his wife, Margaret, and their eight children, who ranged in age from 1 to 17 years. The Younts were joined by their son-in-law Harsha White, his wife, Maude Yount White, and C. W. Towner and his wife and two children, who brought 100 head of cattle.

White was born in 1850 in Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, and moved to Missouri at an early age. He graduated from the University of Missouri, moved to Oregon when he was 20, and worked as a school teacher. He married Joseph and Margaret Yount's daughter, Maude B.

Yount, in 1872. The Whites' daughter, Della May, was 1 year old when the family left Oregon (Fisk Notes, 1988; Doherty, 1974:165).

The journey was not easy. Sometimes the cattle had to be divided into two herds because the water holes, which were often widely spaced, did not hold sufficient water for the large herd. In October they found themselves in the Pahranagat Valley in Lincoln County, Nevada. The first night there, rustlers stole about 50 head of their cattle and drove them into the mountains. The travelers were able to retrieve the cattle several days later, but they did not find the thieves. In the Pahranagat Valley, Yount and Towner rented pasture to rest the cattle before continuing the journey. In the meantime, Yount changed his mind about going to Tombstone and decided to head for southern California. He took several days to scout ahead for a route. The route he selected took him to the Groom Mine, then 60 miles without water to Indian Springs, and then to Ash Meadows, where the cattle could feed and rest. Harsha White and his wife and daughter remained in Hiko, Nevada, during the winter of 1876, where Mrs. White taught school. The Whites joined the Younts at the Manse Ranch the following summer (Fisk Notes, 1988; Doherty, 1974:165-166).

At this point, fate intervened for the Younts. While in Ash Meadows, Yount took his horses to the mountains near the future location of the Johnnie Mine. He left his horses in the hills above the Pahrump Valley and went to the mining camp of Tecopa to obtain supplies for his family. Upon returning, he found, to his horror, that Indians, having identified the draft horses by their collar marks, had killed them all. The Indians —likely led by the renegade Horseshutem—knew that if they killed the draft horses, the Younts would not be able to move on with their wagons and the Indians would be free to poach on Yount's cattle, which they would butcher and use as a source of dried meat. Yount returned to the camp in Ash Meadows, where Mrs. Yount and the children had remained (Fisk Notes, 1988; Doherty, 1974:166; Lingenfelter, 1986:167).

They had heard a rumor that a white family was living 30 miles away at the Pahrump Ranch, so the next morning Yount headed in the direction of Pahrump. From the mountains he could see a green spot in the valley; it was the Pahrump Ranch. When he arrived at the oasis, he found Charles Bennett with his wife and two children. Yount told Bennett of his troubles and was informed that the Indians who had killed his horses were renegades. Bennett said that the Paiute were peaceful and that many worked on his ranch. He had no draft horses to trade, but he informed Yount that he might be able to trade for a ranch 6 miles away owned by three brothers named Jordan. Yount went to Manse Springs and traded his cattle for the Jordan brothers' place, which was quite undeveloped (Fisk Notes, 1988; Doherty, 1974:167).

There was a 12x14-foot house consisting of posts set in the ground with willows nailed to them and mud filled in over the willows, and a sod roof and floor. About 8 acres of barley had been planted and was just coming up. Yount broke some of the saddle horses to the harness and planted a garden, which consisted mainly of watermelon and corn. The crops flourished, and by summer he had plenty of produce to sell at the Tecopa Mine, 30 miles away, where he could charge almost any price he wished. During the summer of 1877 Yount made enough to buy food and clothing for the family that winter. High priority was given to the construction of sleeping quarters for the children—mesquite poles against which corn fodder and stalks were leaned for sides. This material was also used for the roof. Since no school was

available, in the fall of 1878 Yount sent all of his younger children to school in San Bernardino (Fisk Notes, 1988; Doherty, 1974:167).

Yount, Harsha White, and Yount's oldest son, S. E. Yount, took additional land under lease, planting large amounts of barley and corn. They were successful enough to eventually purchase modern machinery, including mowers, headers, and threshers. With the Pacific Coast Borax operations at Furnace Creek and the mines in El Dorado Canyon, Yount could sell everything he raised (Doherty, 1974:167-168).

Success on the ranch provided time for prospecting in the Spring Mountain area. Chief Tecopa showed Yount the location of the Boss Mine and the Columbia Mine, having been previously worked by an old-time prospector who thought the dark copper ore was silver. This led Yount and Harsha White and Ben Hamilton to form the Yellow Pine Mining District. Joseph Yount died in 1907, and Mrs. Yount died in 1912 in San Bernardino (Doherty, 1974:168). Harsha White sold the Manse Ranch for \$50,000 in 1910 (Lingenfelter, 1986:168). White died in Los Angeles in 1923 (Fisk Notes, 1988).

The prices ranchers such as the Younts received in the 1870s and 1880s for their crops showed a greater per ton value than much of the ore being dug by the men in the mining camps. Alfalfa was worth between \$70 and \$200 a ton, and an acre could yield 6 tons a year. Barley brought \$200 a ton, and 2 tons could be obtained from an acre. Vegetables, including corn, beans, potatoes, beets, cabbage, onions, squash, and melons, brought \$200 a ton; fruits and nuts, including apples, pears, peaches, figs, plums, nectarines, apricots, almonds, and walnuts, brought over \$500 a ton. A few ranchers had vineyards and made wine. Vine cuttings were brought by Yount from Las Vegas in his saddlebags. He had 2-1/2 acres in seven varieties of grapes, and his Chateau Manse was said to have been superior to "California's finest." Yount raised chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese; he also had a sawmill in the Charleston Mountains and hauled lumber to Manvel, Vanderbilt, Goodsprings, and Las Vegas. After 1902, Manse hay was hauled to Rhyolite and Beatty in wagons pulled by 7- to 10-horse teams (Lingenfelter, 1986:169; Fisk Notes, 1988; Fisk, 1957).

About 1894, the Whites' daughter Della May married O. J. Fisk, who was born in 1873 in Iowa and at the age of 14 had headed to California. In southern Utah, Indians stole his two mules and supplies and he was forced to cross southern Nevada on foot. He worked as a laborer in the Mojave Desert mining camps and soon went into business for himself, eventually becoming quite well to do. For a time he and his partners, Rose and Palmer, operated a freight line from the railhead at Ivanpah up the Pahrump Valley to Beatty and Rhyolite. The firm also had stores in Greenwater and Silver Lake. It was while engaged in desert freighting that he met Della. He died in San Bernardino in 1960. Della May White Fisk died in San Bernardino in 1969 (Fisk Notes, 1988).

### By Buckboard Through Pahrump

In 1886 Thomas W. Brooks traveled by buckboard from the Los Angeles area to Oasis Valley and the present site of Beatty, Nevada. On his trip, he passed through the Pahrump Valley. His descriptions of the Younts and the life they had built in the wilderness are the best known accounts of the valley at that time. Brooks challenged "many youths, and grumbling maids, fathers and mothers" that they "could come and read a valuable and interesting lesson

of natural life" at the Manse Ranch (Brooks, 1970:9). Brooks stated that Mr. Jordan \$800 in cash and 75 head of American cattle for Jordan's squatter's rights to the Manse Ranch, which consisted of "160 acres of land and the water of a grand old spring" (Brooks, 1970:11).

Brooks wrote, "with an untiring energy, and a blessing of good health, and judicious management," the Younts worked to make the Manse Ranch a grand success. He said, "A dear home, or one more luxuriously supplied, or more convenient, or happier, cannot be found" (Brooks, 1970:12). By 1886, the Younts had built the farm up to 320 acres, which Brooks stated were purchased from the state of Nevada. He described the Manse Ranch as an "Oasis":

*A fertile spot, ornamented with fragrant flowers, evergreens, and every useful product for the comfort and use of man and beast, orchards and vineyards, preserves, raisins and wine, turkeys, ducks, chickens, and geese to the number of 400, fish swimming ponds, large and long, which have 100 inches of warm water constantly flowing through them (Brooks, 1970:12).*

The farm, he said, "is capable of producing a better quality of every variety of product than is purchased in Los Angeles county than any farm in Nevada" (Brooks, 1970:13). Brooks was lavish with his appreciation for Mrs. Yount's accomplishments:

*Too much praise cannot be given the precious mother, Mrs. Yount, who has reared five sons and five daughters here. And though the church, and the schoolhouse and the tick of the telegraph was far away from their oasis home, intelligence and cultivation are there, after nature's own design, and void of the superfluous vanity with which the masses are burdened (Brooks, 1970:13).*

By that time, three of the Yount's five daughters were married, and Della May White, the White's youngest daughter, was still living at home. The children, Brooks noted, were to be sent to Pomona, California, for completion of their education (Brooks, 1970:13).

It was not without some difficulty, however, that Mrs. Yount adapted to the Pahrump Valley wilderness. Upon first arriving in the Pahrump Valley, she asked her husband, on behalf of her children, "Where are we? Where are our neighbors; the church; the schoolhouse and the post office?" Joseph Yount's answer reflected the stark realities of the Pahrump Valley wilderness at that time:

*We are in Palorump [Pahrump] Valley, Nye County, Nevada, and Mr. Bennett, six miles distance, is our only neighbor, except that we consider the hundreds of roving Paiutes neighbors; and as to the church, the schoolhouse and the post office, I hardly know which is the nearest, the settlement on Kern river, the Mormon church at St. George, Utah, or San Bernardino, but it is about 250 miles to the nearest post office (Brooks, 1970:11-12).*

Many years later, Della White Fisk, the Harsha Whites' daughter, was interviewed by Celesta Lowe (granddaughter of another Pahrump area pioneer, Ralph J. "Dad" Fairbanks) at the Fisks' home in San Bernardino, California (C. Lowe, n.d.). Mrs. Fisk recalled how the children

were taken to San Bernardino and placed in school in the fall of each year by her parents, who came after them again in the spring. The trips between the Manse Ranch and San Bernardino remained high spots in her memory. She remembers being "colored with grime" upon arriving at their destination. "School seemed like an unimportant reason," she recalls, "for such a long trip, but I didn't mind, if my father promised I could go to at least one opera" (C. Lowe, n.d.:3).

## Pahrump and the Lost Breyfogle

Few people realize that Pahrump is the focal point of one of the great legends of the old West—that of the Lost Breyfogle Mine, which (along with the tale of the Lost Gunsight Mine) was important in stimulating early exploration of the Pahrump-Death Valley region. Details of the legend vary; the following is from Burr Belden, a well-known historian of the Mojave region (Belden, 1957). This version may or may not be accurate in all details, but it has become a part of the area's folklore.

Charles C. Breyfogle had been the Alameda County, California, assessor, but he left that job and traveled to Geneva. There he built a hotel and sold parcels of land to easterners who had never been to Nevada (Belden, 1957). Geneva looked good on paper, and Breyfogle and his brothers, Joshua and Jacob, made some money. But ore at the camp did not pan out as hoped; Breyfogle decided to try his luck at prospecting and he headed south toward Death Valley, looking for the Lost Gunsight Mine. He was accompanied by three companions he had met at the hotel at Geneva. They traveled south through Silver Peak and camped at Ash Meadows. There his companions told him they were headed for Texas by a back route where they intended to join the Confederate Army. Somewhere to the south, probably in the vicinity of Shoshone, the four men were attacked during the night by Paiute Indians. Breyfogle was sleeping some distance from his companions. Their cries awakened him, and he snatched up his shoes and fled, taking no time to grab a gun or a canteen. Breyfogle wandered about and stumbled onto a little spring. There he attempted to put his boots on, but found his bleeding feet were too swollen. He filled his boots with water, improvised canteens, and headed south looking for the Mormon Trail. After two days without food, and delirious with thirst, Breyfogle came upon Stump Spring. He was only half sure of the places he had been. Once he had fallen on an outcropping where, exhausted, he had slept. When he awakened he picked up several pieces of beautiful, gold-laced, "jewelry rock" and continued on in his search for water and the trail. Breyfogle's troubles did not end at Stump Spring, however. While there, he was discovered by Indians who, instead of killing him, took him captive (Belden, 1957).

Charles Bennett, owner of the Pahrump Ranch (where he operated a trading post primarily used by Indians) had heard about the white man the Indians were holding captive and arranged for his release. Breyfogle was brought to Pahrump and it was obvious he had not been well-treated by the Indians. Among other things, he had been smashed in the head by a hatchet, and when Bennett found him he was suffering from numerous sores and was clad only in rags. Breyfogle told Bennett of his aimless thirst-driven wandering and his torture by the Indians. He showed Bennett the specimens of gold he had found. Bennett subsequently retold Breyfogle's story and exhibited samples of the ore at his store. This information, passed from one to another, gave rise to the legend of the Lost Breyfogle. The hatchet wound in Breyfogle's head, along with his sufferings during the ordeal, had fogged his memory. He was never able to

locate the spot where he had found the beautiful specimens. Years went by. Undiscouraged by the failure of others to find the Breyfogle, hopeful prospectors continued to filter into the region in search of the lost treasure. Meanwhile, Bennett sold his ranch to Aaron and Rosie Winters and took a turn at hauling borax out of Death Valley (Belden, 1957).

In time, the Younts took over the Manse Ranch. Joseph Yount and his son-in-law, Harsha White, who were on good terms with the Indians, allowed them to camp and to hold ceremonial dances at the ranch. Such events are said to have brought several hundred Indians there at a time. Indians were employed on the ranch, and the women helped the white women with their work. Years passed and the women told tales of their childhood in relaxed moments. They told of the white man they had once held captive, and how they made him walk on all fours and rode him like a horse and made him buck like a bucking horse. For them, this had been great sport. They also told how one of the boys had struck the white man in the head with a hatchet and made him "very sick" (Belden, 1957). They remembered how, during his captivity but prior to the hatchet wound, he had shown them his mineral specimens and tried to use them to barter for his liberty. Clearly, the white man had been Breyfogle. Apparently during his captivity he had told enough about the fabulous outcropping to give the Indians an idea of its location. Based on what he said, it seemed likely that the gold was located on the west slope of the Charleston Mountains, probably in the vicinity of Mount Sterling. The Indian women's information fit nicely with the information Bennett had given them years before, and the Younts decided to grubstake a search. Ben Hamilton, an old mining man who lived at the ranch, and Sam and Bill Yount, two of Joseph Yount's sons, took to the hills as prospectors (Belden, 1957).

They hit it! About 18 miles north of Pahrump on the west slope of the Charleston Mountains, the three men found a rich gold outcropping. They located their discovery and named it the North Belle. That discovery set off an exciting gold rush in southern Nevada. The Younts sold their interest to Bob and George Montgomery, who would later find fame in Rhyolite and Skidoo. Montgomery built a mill. O. J. Fisk was there in 1898 constructing a mill and returned ten years later as master mechanic of an operation. The Montgomery brothers sold the North Belle to the Latter-day Saints Church, which operated the property and, in turn, sold it to a Mr. Johnson of Los Angeles. The North Belle operated for thirty years. Another rich property, the Chispa, was located 3 miles from the North Belle, and there the town of Johnnie developed (Belden, 1957).

Many believe the North Belle was the Lost Breyfogle (Belden, 1957). Long-time Pahrump residents do not agree, however, noting that the quartz Breyfogle found was black, and quartz at the North Belle was white (Ford, 1989). Jack Longstreet also did not think the North Belle was the long-lost mine. Deke Lowe believes the Breyfogle may have been rediscovered as Lee Camp in the Funeral Mountains (D. Lowe, 1989). (His version is related in the following section.)

### The Lee Brothers

The Lee brothers were major figures in the history of the Pahrump Valley area. There were four brothers: Philander (Phi), Leander (Cub), Meander, and Salamander. Phi and Cub first came to the Pahrump area in the winter of 1874-1875 with a herd of cattle from the San Joaquin Valley. They staked out a spring in the Amargosa Valley (Lingenfelter, 1986:167). Phi

Lee, Harry Spiller (perhaps a relative of Henry Spiller who first showed Aaron Winters the test for borax—sources don't say), and Billy Yount (a son of Joseph Yount) are credited with finding the giant deposit of white borax salts that they named Monte Blanco (Lingenfelter, 1986:175; Spears, 1892:62). This discovery, which occurred in 1882, followed Winter's finding of borax at Furnace Creek. Phi and his brother Cub found another borax mineral deposit the next year, later named the Lila C. Roughly 3 million tons of borates still remain in the Monte Blanco deposit (Lingenfelter, 1986:175). Phi Lee and his partners sold their interests in the huge Monte Blanco deposit for \$4,000. Cub Lee remained in the area and Phi used his share to purchase the Resting Spring Ranch, where he stayed until about 1915. He then moved to a site in the Charleston Mountains, having traded the Resting Spring Ranch for the new place with the Tecopa Consolidated Mines' (Gunsight and Noonday) president, Dr. L. D. Godshall, in whose family the ranch remained as of 1989 (D. Lowe, 1989; C. Lowe, 1966; Lingenfelter, 1986:175; Spears, 1892:62). Both Phi and Cub married Indian women. Phi's wife, Sally, was a Panamint reported to be a sister of Hungry Bill and Panamint Tom, famous in their own right in the history of Death Valley (C. Lowe, 1966; 1989).

Sally and Phi Lee's children included Dick and Bob, who were probably in their thirties and living on the Resting Spring Ranch when they got the Breyfogle bug and went looking for the lost mine. They hitched up their outfit and drove to Ash Meadows and then on to the Indian Pass area in the Funeral Mountains on the west side of the Amargosa Valley. There they camped and prospected in the vicinity for several days, finding nothing (D. Lowe, 1988). That night, sitting in front of the campfire, they discussed where they should look next. As they talked, the evening star was hanging over the mountain to the west of them, twinkling.

Bob Lee said, "We never went up that mountain, we didn't check that out."

"Oh hell," Dick Lee said, "that's barren; you can tell by looking at it" (D. Lowe, 1988).

The star remained on Bob's mind, however, and he talked his brother into staying another day or two to explore the mountain. The next morning, within an hour after breakfast, they hit a "helluva rich streak" of gold (D. Lowe, 1988). That discovery led to the founding of Lee Camp in the Funeral Mountains, and the brothers made a good deal of money. They took their money to Rhyolite, which was near enough to be visible from their camp. There they dressed in fancy clothes including stovepipe hats, played the stock market, and of course soon were broke (D. Lowe, 1988).

When Bob Lee was an old man, Deke Lowe, a long-time resident of the area, was talking to Lee at his ranch located in southern Pahrump Valley, about 2 or 3 miles north of the Hidden Hills Ranch. Lee's place was in dilapidated condition—tin cans, piles of junk, and old car bodies were scattered about (D. Lowe, 1988; 1989). Lowe looked at Lee and asked, "Don't you wish you had put some of that money away?" referring to the money he had made at Lee Camp.

Lee's short reply summarizes the prospector's credo: "Well, you know," he said slowly. "I'd rather be a has-been than a never-was" (D. Lowe, 1988).

Bob Lee lived to be a very old man. In 1966, when he was living on his ranch in the Pahrump Valley (where he had resided since 1915), he was asked his age. "Oh, maybe 93 or 94," then wondered aloud if it made any difference, shrugged his shoulders, and grinned (C. Lowe, 1966).

Dora Lee, a daughter of Phi Lee, brother of Bob and Dick Lee, married a white man, Gallant Richard Brown, and their son Steve, a life-long resident of the Pahrump Valley, was born at Resting Springs; a second son was named Ernie (Brown and Arnold, 1988).

### Fourth of July at the Manse Ranch

The Fourth of July was an important holiday on the American frontier. It was usually celebrated with much fanfare and enthusiasm by residents of the half-dozen big ranches located in southern Nevada. Besides the Manse and Pahrump ranches in Pahrump Valley, there were the Indian Springs Ranch and the Kyle and Stewart ranches in the Las Vegas Valley.

On the Fourth of July 1894, the entire population of the Las Vegas Valley and, we may presume, Indian Springs and the Pahrump Valley, gathered to celebrate the nation's birth at the home of Harsha White on the Manse Ranch. More than 50 people are said to have come for the festivities, some from as far away as 100 miles, including Helen Stewart and her children from the Las Vegas Valley, and guests from Pioche (Townley, 1974:4). Guests began arriving on July 3. They were entertained with various amusements; a dance was held that evening; and after midnight the Fourth was welcomed in by the firing of pistols and an anvil salute (Townley, 1974:4).

Festivities on the Fourth involved exercises and egg races, rock races, foot races, and sack races. John Yount provided an exhibition of turning and jumping on the bar, and the guests roared with laughter at the antics of George Rose and Charles Grundy, who played clowns. Patriotic songs were sung and a second dance was held that evening. A feast catered by William Sollender helped keep spirits high. On July 5, the owners of the Pahrump Ranch, the MacArthurs, invited guests to adjourn to their ranch 6 miles away for an evening of enjoyment followed by dinner at 1:00 in the morning. Guests headed home on July 6 (Townley, 1974:4-5).

### Determining a Border for Nevada

In 1873 the U.S. government commissioned Alexis Waldemar Von Schmidt to establish the location of the oblique border between Nevada and California (Cook, n.d.:22). Von Schmidt used the Colorado River as his reference point and experienced some difficulties in his endeavors. Not the least of his troubles was the fact that the bed of the river kept shifting. The line Von Schmidt surveyed is known to be inaccurate; it is about a mile too far to the east, thus placing a segment of the Nevada portion of the Pahrump Valley in California. In 1893 the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey attempted to determine the exact location of the line; it completed the project six years later, in 1899. Two years later, California accepted the line, and in two more years so did Nevada. Congress, however, never officially approved the boundary. In 1911 the Surveyor General of Nevada wrote the U.S. Land Office for information concerning the boundary line and was informed that its location was still somewhat of an open question (Cook, n.d.: 22-23).

Problems in delineating the border between the two states are more than academic as far as withdrawal of Pahrump lands from federal into state and private hands is concerned. Private land holdings in the Pahrump Valley butt up against the Von Schmidt boundary close to

where State Highway 372 crosses into California. In this area, no private land is held in the zone between the Von Schmidt boundary and the present line. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's map for the Death Valley Junction quadrangle shows the only privately held land in the Pahrump Valley located in the zone between the two boundaries is in two sections several miles south of the Manse Ranch and in the area of the Hidden Hills Ranch. Farther north there are private land holdings in the zone between the two boundaries in the vicinity of the farm area in the Amargosa Valley. Von Schmidt's confusion concerning the exact location of the boundary between California and Nevada has affected the passage of land from federal to private ownership in the Pahrump Valley. Bureau of Land Management records indicate that most privately held land in the Pahrump Valley near where Highway 372 crosses the state boundaries was withdrawn from federal ownership under the state select land program when the Von Schmidt line would have been the only one available for surveyors and developers (U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1988).

## CHAPTER 3

### Pahrump Takes Shape

All land in the state of Nevada was originally under the ownership of the federal government, and most land in the state remains under federal control. In fact, Nevada has the lowest proportion of privately owned land of any state in the union except Alaska. Very little land in southern Nevada is, in fact, privately held. Some private land is in Beatty, somewhat more in the farm region of the Amargosa Valley; but most of the privately held land in the Ash Meadows area of the Amargosa Valley will eventually return to federal ownership. Some land at Indian Springs and in the Charleston Mountains is privately owned, and sizeable amounts of real estate are in private hands in the Moapa and Virgin valleys. The largest chunk of privately held property in southern Nevada is in the Las Vegas Valley; the second largest is in the Pahrump Valley, with holdings larger than those in the Virgin and Moapa valleys (M. Hafen, 1988a).

The vast majority of private land in the Pahrump Valley is found in nine townships laid out roughly along the path of Highway 160. (A township is an area 6 miles square, containing 36 blocks of land 1 square mile each. Each block is known as a section, and each section contains 640 acres.) Within this area, private land holdings are found in roughly 160 sections. The only township that B.L.M. maps show to be completely privately owned is the one where the old Pahrump Ranch was located, where Highways 160 and 372 intersect (T20S-R53E). The two townships directly north of the above-mentioned one also have considerable private holdings (T19S-R53E and T18S-R53E), as does the township immediately south and a little east of the junction of Highway 160 and 372 (T21S-R54E), the site of the old Manse Ranch headquarters. The remaining townships have relatively fewer private holdings.

In the past, when a new territory was opened up, it was in the federal government's interest to move land into private hands so that farms could be established, towns developed, and commerce begun. The government devised a number of methods to transfer land ownership into private hands.

Much of the withdrawal of land in the heart of the Pahrump Valley occurred prior to 1900 under the Federal State Select Lands Program. Under this program, when a territory became a state, the state was given sections 16 and 36 of every township. This land was intended for "the maintenance of public schools" (Nevada Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, 1988). Just how state select lands were to be administered was subject to negotiation between the state and the federal government.

While the program involving sections 16 and 36 usually worked well in better-watered states, where more of the land was suitable for human occupation, in Nevada sections 16 and 36 in most townships were likely to be worthless desert tracts. Thus, the state of Nevada worked out a program with the federal government whereby the state would trade its state select lands for a designated number of acres to be located anywhere in the state. All a pioneer had to do was inform the state that he wished to purchase title to land (almost always located at or near water), and the state would sell him the land from its state select allotment lands.

The majority of the privately held real estate in the three key townships in the Pahrump Valley came into private ownership through the state select program prior to 1900. Indeed, much of the privately held land in townships peripheral to the above-mentioned came through the state select program before 1900. A few homesteads were attempted around 1910, but many of those did not involve the acquisition of title. During the 1950s a number of homesteads were also attempted in the township due west of the Manse Ranch (T21S-R53E), but many of the individuals involved likewise did not acquire title.

Though the Manse and Pahrump ranches were occupied by white ranchers in the 1870s, official Bureau of Land Management records show that the area that was the Pahrump Ranch at that time was not legally withdrawn from federal ownership until February 1880. The contention that land in the Pahrump Valley was not legally withdrawn from federal ownership until 1880 is corroborated by Lehman's notes in *By Buckboard to Beatty* (Brooks, 1970). This source shows that the names of Aaron Winters and Charles Bennett, as well as the Younts, are strangely missing from the deeds prior to 1886 for the Manse and Pahrump ranches (Brooks, 1970:39-40). Moreover, the area comprising the original Manse Ranch was not officially withdrawn until September 1884. Prior to that, "ownership" seems to have been by squatter's rights.

Around 1915 there was a flurry of activity as attempts were made to gain title to lands through the Carey Act in the area south of Gamebird (T21S-R54E and T21S-R53E). These efforts were not successful. The Carey Act, passed in 1894, was designed to get private enterprise involved in the development of water for the reclamation of arable lands; the reclamation company would not acquire title to the land, but would profit from the sale of water rights to entrymen up to 160 acres (Lamar, 1977:163; Norcross, 1911:23). During the 1950s there was another flurry of activity by people attempting to gain title to federal land through the Desert Land Act of 1877 and, again, many of these were not successful. The total acreage released by the federal government under this program in the Pahrump Valley is minuscule when compared with that released under the state select lands program (data on land releases in the Pahrump Valley were obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1988). Tim Hafen (M. Hafen, 1988b) estimates that land privatized under the Carey Act, Desert Land Act, and Homestead Act totals approximately 3500 acres.

## A Stopover at the Manse Ranch

In January 1905, Francis Marion "Borax" Smith thought that he had permission from Senator William A. Clark (the Montana copper magnate for whom Clark County, Nevada, is named) to use Las Vegas as the starting point for the railroad Smith planned to build to the north. Construction headquarters were established in Las Vegas and the first spadeful of dirt turned May 29, 1905 (Myrick, 1963:546). Work on grading a roadbed progressed until August 1905, when it became clear that Senator Clark would deny Borax Smith the right to connect with his San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake (SP, LA & SL) Railroad connecting Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. Denied connection rights, Smith quickly negotiated with the Santa Fe Railroad, which agreed to allow him to connect his Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad at Ludlow, California (Myrick, 1963:546-547). Not only did the change in plans mean that the new railroad connecting the main line of the Santa Fe with Gold Center, located just south of Beatty, would

be 167 miles long (instead of the 118 miles to a connecting point in Las Vegas), but also it meant that the entire construction headquarters, including teams, wagons, Fresno scrapers, and other railroad construction equipment, would have to be moved to Ludlow (Myrick, 1963:544, 547). The equipment was moved through the Pahrump Valley, where the construction outfit paused at the Manse Ranch (Myrick, 1963:544, 547).

## The Period of Elevated Expectations

The early years of the twentieth century formed a period of rising expectations in Nevada. Jim Butler's discovery of silver at Tonopah had, for all intents and purposes, saved the state after a precipitous decline in mineral production and population for two decades prior to 1900. Harry Stimler's discovery at Goldfield in 1902, followed by the discovery by Shorty Harris and Ed Cross at Bullfrog in 1904, added impetus to the new economic boom started at Tonopah. Senator Clark's purchase of the Stewart Ranch in the Las Vegas Valley, his construction of the SP, LA & SL Railroad, and the construction of railroads to the north by Senator Clark and Borax Smith, linking Tonopah with Las Vegas and the Santa Fe Railroad at Ludlow, California, provided further optimism about the economic future of southern Nevada.

The Pahrump Valley was perhaps the most isolated community in the region, with neither good roads nor a railroad; nevertheless, there was great enthusiasm for the valley's future based on the large tracts of land suitable for agriculture, a relatively long growing season, and seemingly endless quantities of artesian water.

At least two groups of colonists seemed to be interested in settling in the Pahrump Valley. The first effort, some years prior to 1905, was by individuals, described as "tenderfeet," from the eastern United States; it apparently was a failure. Little is known of this effort, which is only mentioned in an article three sentences long in the December 1905 issue of the Las Vegas Age ("Pahrump Colony," 1905). In that year there was a flurry of activity among a group of southern Californians who planned to form a colony in the Pahrump Valley. Hundreds of acres were said to have been purchased in the valley, and at least 60 families from southern California had been promised land and were expected to arrive in the fall of that year. Each family was to acquire a ranch of 60 to 180 acres. Colonists were from suburban towns in Los Angeles and from the Santa Ana area ("Valley Colonized by Californians," 1905). Establishment of the colony in Pahrump, a Los Angeles newspaper said, would "necessitate a picturesque pilgrimage across the desert, probably from the Salt Lake Railroad [Las Vegas], two or three days' journey by wagon" ("Pilgrimage into Desert," 1905). Advance representatives of the colonists were reported to be in the valley in the fall of 1905, making preparations to sink wells ("Valley Colonized by Californians," 1905).

The colony was to be sponsored by borax king and builder of the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, Borax Smith, and by railroad titan E. H. Harriman. Railroad officials were said to be interested in developing Pahrump to stimulate business for the railroad ("Colony Scheme," 1905, Supplement). The Borax line, it was felt, would place the valley in "direct communication with the outside world and double the profits of agriculture" ("Colony Scheme," 1905, Supplement).

At the request of Harriman, William M. Martin made a trip through the valley to judge the feasibility of the colony scheme. His report is filled with exaggerations and inaccuracies. Charleston Peak is said to be 9000 feet high. The Pahrump Valley is said to be about 65 miles long and an average of 35 miles wide with "a dense growth of sagebrush and greasewood, with every evidence of water close to the surface" ("Colony Scheme," 1905, Supplement). He indicated the water would be "simple to develop." His report stated that the temperature rarely falls below 40 degrees; frosts occur only in the dead of night and are never so severe as to injure crops. Summer temperatures rarely exceed 95 to 100 degrees in the shade, and the few ranchers who initially went into the valley and took up the most desirable places were said to have made fortunes in spite of the fact that they were, at best, miles from a railroad.

In all, there were plans to open 600,000 acres of rich agricultural and grazing land in the Pahrump Valley ("Colony Scheme," 1905, Supplement). It is understandable that the Las Vegas newspaper would countenance the hyperbole repeated here; Las Vegas expected to profit from the valley's colonization and to function as its primary supply center ("Valley Colonized by Californians," 1905).

In 1908 the Las Vegas Age reported that "something over 60" colonists from southern California had settled in the Pahrump Valley under the direction of E. M. Funk, who was from Los Angeles but made his home in Sandy, Nevada. Funk was interested in the irrigation of large tracts of land in the Pahrump Valley, and by 1908 he had secured a rig for drilling wells that would irrigate several thousand acres ("Colonists in Pahrump Valley," 1908). Though one wonders if 60 colonists from California had indeed settled there, perhaps the exaggeration is indicative of the enthusiasm felt for the valley's potential and, to a lesser degree, the real activity present in the valley.

No mention of early attempts at colonizing the Pahrump Valley can be found in the Las Vegas newspapers after 1908. There may have been other attempts, based on development of desert lands under the Carey Act, but only further research could substantiate them. These early attempts to colonize the valley were failures. Efforts to place a large population in the Pahrump Valley would have to wait another 60 years; despite the hyperbole, the Pahrump Valley was, and remains, a marginal agricultural area. Yet, as the Las Vegas Age correctly surmised in 1905 regarding the failure of Pahrump's first colony scheme, "it was not the fault of the country. White's ranch at Manse shows what can be done there" ("Pahrump Colony," 1905).

By 1905 both the Manse and the Pahrump ranches were productive enterprises and were known as resorts for weary desert travelers. Trees provided shade in the hottest months, the finest of vegetables and fruits were grown, and their springs provided water for swimming and relaxation. Many varieties of trees grew on the Manse Ranch including willows, cottonwoods, poplars, and fruit and nut trees, such as walnut, apples, peaches, pears, and plums; umbrella trees were clustered around the ranch house. Several varieties of grapes flourished ("Manse," 1905). Mining activity throughout the southern Nevada and Death Valley areas, especially at Rhyolite and Beatty, provided ready markets for the ranches' products; Harsha White is reported to have made \$10,000 in one year on hay and meat shortly before 1905 ("Pilgrimage into Desert," 1905). C. C. Orr was the manager of the Manse Ranch—popularly known as "White's" place—in 1906 ("Southern Nevada's Oasis," 1906).

In 1910, Harsha White sold the Manse Ranch for \$50,000. At that time the property consisted of 760 acres, 300 of which were under cultivation in orchards, grains, and alfalfa. White also owned 400 acres of valuable timber land in the Charleston Mountains, which were included in the sale. Purchasers of the ranch were Hoffman and Vetter of Redondo, California. As was so often the case, the purchasers announced big plans for the ranch. They expected to construct an 8-acre reservoir, 12 feet in depth, enabling them to conserve water and cultivate the entire 760 acres of the ranch, as well as to sell water to others. They also announced plans to build a substantial hotel ("White Ranch is Sold...", 1910). None of the plans seem to have materialized.

In 1909 the U.S. Geological Survey published a document by Walter C. Mendenhall, titled *Some Desert Watering Places in Southeastern California and Southwestern Nevada*, which is notably free of the hyperbole of the day. The following is the entry for Pahrump:

*Pahrump, one of the oldest settlements in the southern portion of Nevada, is about 7 miles northwest of Manse, on the road to Fairbanks Ranch. It is a large ranch, in whose cultivation a number of Indians are employed. Here orchards, vineyards, and extensive fields of alfalfa flourish, and the water used in irrigation is supplied by a number of large, deep-seated warm springs, similar to those at Manse. Travelers can obtain hay and grain here (Mendenhall, 1909:91).*

Manse Springs is described:

*The springs at Manse have been known for years to travelers going northward from points in southern Nevada, and the place has long been the principal stopping point along this route. By the use of the water which the springs yield, this portion of the desert has been converted into a veritable oasis, and the 500 or 600 hundred acres of alfalfa, orchards, and vineyards show the capabilities of the desert soil when water can be applied in sufficient quantity.*

*The spring is over 20 feet in diameter and from 5 to 6 feet deep. The bottom is of white sand, and warm water boils up through it in large volume. These important springs and those of similar character at Saratoga Springs, Resting Springs, and Indian Springs all occur along a line that runs nearly northeast and southwest. All of them are remarkable for the volume and purity of the water they yield (Mendenhall, 1909:91-92).*

Mendenhall also mentioned Stump Spring, also located in Pahrump Valley:

*This spring is about halfway between Sandy and Manse, on the old stage road from Ivanpah to Manse. It is protected by a curbing, and the water must be drawn by a bucket. Roads from Stump Spring lead westward to Resting Springs, and eastward to Las Vegas, both by way of Crystal Springs and by way of Wilson's Ranch (Mendenhall, 1909:92).*

In 1914, State Engineer William Kearney conducted a survey of the Pahrump Valley. An account of his survey in the *Las Vegas Age* states that he believed that the "agricultural

possibilities of this valley are so great that it is hard to estimate them" ("Clark County Looks Good...," 1914). Kearney's account goes on:

*The soil is as rich as it is possible for soil to be, and the climate is semi-tropical. Fruits and vegetables of all kinds mature there early, and are of the highest quality. Peaches, apricots, grapes, in fact all the semi-tropical crops, reach the highest degree of perfection ("Clark County Looks Good...," 1914).*

There are many accounts of well-drilling equipment being moved into the valley and wells being drilled in the period 1910 to 1920. The first attempt to obtain artesian water from wells in the valley probably occurred in 1910, when the Pahrump Valley Land and Irrigation Company drilled a well on the Pahrump Ranch; the attempt was a failure ("Pahrump Valley to be Drilled," 1910; M. Hafen, 1976:4). Frank A. Buol, later known as "Pop" Buol (and brother to Peter Buol, who was Las Vegas' first mayor and a state assemblyman from Clark County), was a land owner and supporter of the Pahrump Valley. Buol brought in an artesian well in early 1913 that was 325 feet deep, flowing 25 inches (located in Section 15, T20S-R53E) ("Big Well in Pahrump Valley...," 1913). In 1913, 4 wells were drilled just north of the Pahrump Ranch, and artesian waters were encountered in 3 of them. Twenty-eight wells were drilled in the Pahrump Valley in 1916, 15 of which produced flowing artesian waters. Of the wells that did not flow, several were more than 150 feet deep and 6 were shallow (M. Hafen, 1976:4).

Between 1935 and 1945, several additional wells were drilled in the vicinity of the big Manse and Pahrump Ranch springs (M. Hafen, 1976:5). During the 1950s, numerous wells were drilled. By the middle 1970s, water levels in wells in areas of concentrated pumping were dropping at the rate of about 2 feet per year. A sample of 15 selected wells, where depths ranged from 60 to 218 feet, showed discharges of from 275 to 1225 gallons per minute, with an average of 730 gallons per minute (M. Hafen, 1976:5).

In 1910 Charles Deady, surveyor general of Nevada, noted that he had applications for 200,000 acres in the Pahrump Valley filed for under the Carey Act. Most of the land under application, he stated, was unsurveyed ("Untitled," Las Vegas Age, February 12, 1910). Frank Buol stated that the Pahrump Valley was "destined to be another Las Vegas Valley" ("Big Well in Pahrump Valley...," 1913). This seems to have been the first time that anyone, at least in writing, noted any equivalents in potential between the Las Vegas and Pahrump valleys.

By 1916 ownership of the Pahrump Ranch had passed into the hands of a wealthy consortium known as the Pahrump Valley Company, whose principal owner, Isadore B. Dockweiler, lived in Los Angeles. The ranch employed eighteen hands at that time, and a large "Caterpillar engine outfit" had been purchased for cultivation of a "considerable acreage." Dockweiler, it was reported, was considering selling the property for \$250,000. Meanwhile, the Raycraft tract of land had grown to 600 acres and was being "considerably improved" ("Pahrump Valley," 1916). In 1917, the Pahrump Valley Company made arrangements for the planting of 200 acres of cotton on the Pahrump Ranch. Climatic conditions, it was noted, were similar to those in the Imperial Valley. This announcement, which appeared in the Las Vegas Age on February 24, 1917, is the first mention of cotton growing in the Pahrump Valley; but there are no further mentions of the effort in that period ("Will Plant Cotton," 1917).

## Lawless Country

The Pahrump Valley was more than 160 miles from the county seat at Tonopah, and it remained quite isolated from other communities for many decades. It shared with Ash Meadows a reputation for lawlessness. Groups and individuals tended to deal with illegal and criminal acts in their own way.

In 1910, Harsha White told of an incident that had occurred about 30 years previously, which illustrates how miners and ranchers in Pahrump tended to settle disputes ("Indian Justice...", 1910). It seems some local Indians had been stealing and killing ranchers' livestock. Growing tired of the Indians' behavior, the settlers and miners were determined to put a stop to it; the methods they used would be extremely controversial today, to say the least. Ranchers and miners held a meeting at Ivanpah and notified the Indians that those guilty of stealing and killing stock must be brought to justice. To secure this end, they held two Southern Paiute hostage and sent word to the relatives of the hostages that the perpetrators of the crimes must be caught and punished or the lives of the hostages would be "sacrificed."

Not wishing the deaths of the innocent hostages, a band of Indian trackers set out on the trail of the criminals, two men named Panquitch and Horseshutem. (Horse shutem had been implicated in the 1876 killing of Joseph Yount's draft horses.) The criminals were tracked over many miles of desert and Panquitch was cornered at the Wilson Ranch west of Las Vegas. One Indian caught and pinned Panquitch's arms and another picked up an ax and split open his skull. The Wilsons, owners of the ranch and themselves part Indian, were called as witnesses to the act, and proof of Panquitch's death was sent back to Ivanpah. The Indian posse then picked up the trail of Horseshutem. A long chase ensued, and after several days he was finally overtaken near Tybo, Nevada, more than 250 miles from the scene of his crimes. Horseshutem was shot in the back; proof of his death was sent back to Ivanpah, whereupon the innocent hostages were released. The Indians' killing and stealing of stock were said to have ceased thereafter ("Indian Justice...", 1910).

Frontier justice in Pahrump produced a number of shootings and killings. In 1910, one killing led to worries about a possible Indian uprising. Joe Lake, a white man, killed Charlie Tecopa, son of Chief Tecopa, at the Manse Ranch. The cause of the trouble was not determined, but Lake claimed that the Indian had opened fire on him first. A coroner was summoned from Beatty by whites and news of the killing quickly spread among the local Indians. Tecopa was the last surviving chief of the Tecopa "royal" family, and the Indians were outraged. They gathered in the vicinity of the Manse Ranch and threatened action, vowing vengeance on the slayer. Two days later, thirty Indians were camped at the ranch; they refused to allow officers to take Lake to Amargosa, stating that it was their right to "mete out justice according to their own standards." Ranchers guarded the prisoner closely for the next two days. Finally, on the fifth day, the prisoner was smuggled to Johnnie under cover of darkness and taken to Goldfield ("Tecopa Chief's Son Killed...", 1911).

Old-timers in the valley say there was always some kind of feud or personal grudge precipitating violence in the community. Deke Lowe (1989) told of the murder of the Manse Ranch owner in the 1920s. The victim, a Mr. Kazarang, had a reputation for being stingy. Lowe cited, as an example of his tightfistedness, how a lavish meal could be obtained at the cafe in

Shoshone for 50 cents, yet Kazarang, a person of some means, would sit outside the restaurant beside his parked car and eat cheese and crackers rather than purchase a dinner. A ranch employee became embroiled with Kazarang in a dispute over wages, contending that the rancher was shorting him. The worker vowed vengeance. Not long afterward, Kazarang was found dead in his pigpen, where the pigs had chewed on him. An investigation revealed that the hired hand had shot the owner, put a rope around him, and dragged him into the pigpen. The employee was arrested, tried in Tonopah, and found guilty, but he received a light sentence because everyone in the area was aware of the owner's stinginess and his tendency to cheat people (D. Lowe, 1989).

There was a tradition in the Pahrump area of being on the margin of the law, so it is not surprising that residents tended to ignore the Prohibition laws of the 1920s and early 1930s. The valley was the site of considerable production of illegal alcohol. As might be expected, such activity sometimes led to violence. One case involved a deadly confrontation between Joe L. Hudson, a trapper, and "Tank" Sharp, a man of quarter-Indian descent, at Hidden Ranch, John Yount's property south of the Manse Ranch. Sharp, it seems, had been drinking all afternoon, though he was not drunk. Hudson arrived about 9:00 that evening, and Sharp immediately accused him of being one of "those damn prohis who put me out of a job." Throughout the evening, Sharp insisted that Hudson was a "prohi" and was implicated in the raid on stills in the area a few days earlier. Sharp vowed vengeance, yet John Yount seemed to have succeeded in persuading him to go to bed. Hudson was invited to spend the rest of the night at the ranch. About midnight, Hudson stepped out of the house to drain the radiator of his car. As he walked out, he was narrowly missed by a shot. He ran to his car and grabbed his rifle from the front seat. In the darkness, he heard the words, "You damn prohi, I'll get you now" ("Murder at Pahrump," 1931).

As Hudson stepped around the car, he met a "human being" with a gun and opened fire. "I let him have it before he could get me," he later explained. Sharp was found shot in the chest; he never regained consciousness and died in less than half an hour. Richard Lee, Mrs. Lee, and Yount got in the car to drive to Goodsprings to notify the authorities, but the car broke down and Lee was forced to walk 30 miles into Goodsprings. An investigation proved that Sharp did run a still and a jury found that Hudson had shot in self-defense ("Murder at Pahrump," 1931).

But the story does not end there. We now know that Pahrump Indians considered Joe L. Hudson to be a "mean" man (Arnold, 1989). Many whites in the community did not think much better, considering him a "no good" (Hughes, 1989). In the fall of 1935, Hudson was living in a small house by a spring near the southeast margin of the Pahrump Ranch. A number of Indians lived in the vicinity, including Oscar Bruce, a Southern Paiute from Pahrump, who lived about one quarter mile away from Hudson. Hudson's killing of "Tank" Sharp undoubtedly remained in the local Indians' memory. Once again Hudson became embroiled in violence with a local Indian, but this time the outcome was different.

It started when Jim Steve, a Navajo living in Pahrump, approached Hudson's house on foot. It is unknown why he did so; perhaps the two had had a disagreement. Unexpectedly, Hudson drew down on Steve with his rifle and shot him. It may be that having killed one Indian without punishment, Hudson supposed he could get away with such an act again. Steve fell wounded, seemingly dead. Jim Steve's children either witnessed the event or quickly heard

about it. Alarmed, they ran to Oscar Bruce's house for help. Bruce wasted no time in reacting. He grabbed his rifle and headed for Hudson's place. Rather than approach from the front, as Steve had done, Bruce snuck up from the back, and slipped around the side of the building to the front where, through an open window, he saw Hudson. Bruce stuck his rifle through the window and killed Hudson instantly. About the same time, Bruce and the others learned that Jim Steve was not dead, but had only been knocked out from a shot across the forehead.

Rosie Arnold, a relative of Oscar Bruce, was at Judge Kimball's house in Beatty when the sheriff's deputy for southern Nye County, Vic Vignolo, arrived to pick up Kimball to accompany him to Pahrump to investigate the murder. Hours later she was still at Kimball's house when the judge arrived home before taking Bruce to jail in Tonopah. She remembered looking out the window of the judge's house and seeing her relative in custody in the back seat of the deputy's car. The next day Rosie and her mother rode horseback to Pahrump to see the site of the crime their relative had committed. She remembered how the wall of the room was splattered with Hudson's blood. Oscar Bruce was tried and convicted in Tonopah, but only served about a year in the state penitentiary in Carson City. Hudson's bad reputation was seen to have been an important factor in the relatively light sentence (Arnold, 1989; Hughes, 1989).

Such stories are more than isolated incidents. Virtually anyone who spent more than a short period of time in Pahrump in the period before World War II can recall numerous acts of violence and frontier justice, in which an aggrieved party took the law into his own hands.

Although Pahrump Valley in the 1950s was far better policed than it had been earlier, the valley was still isolated. In an era when most of the United States was being linked by television, radio contact between Pahrump and the outside world was still cumbersome. Bill Turner was the Nye County deputy from Pahrump in the early 1950s, and he related that, because there were no telephones in the valley, he knew of two "hot spots"—areas from which he could contact Bishop, California, by radio. The Bishop police would relay Turner's messages to sheriff's headquarters in Tonopah and would in turn send messages back from Tonopah to Turner (D. and B. Turner, 1988).

The efficient linking of Pahrump with the outside world through modern highways and communication systems, along with the use of modern police and judicial methods, has put an end to a law enforcement system that resembled the rough and ready ways of the frontier. These changes have stopped individuals from taking the law into their own hands through revenge and personal vendettas. But these practices remain a part of Pahrump's colorful past.

## The Pahrump Economy in the 1930's

By the early 1930's the agricultural potential of the Pahrump Valley was legendary, yet the valley remained relatively undeveloped. Although it was estimated to have three-fourths of the available water to be found in the Moapa Valley, there was no comparable community growth. A report prepared by the University of Nevada took note of this disparity and listed several reasons why Pahrump lagged behind Moapa (Venstrom, 1932:81-82). The report stated that most of the water in the Pahrump Valley was underground, with little surface flow, in comparison to the Moapa Valley. Further, Pahrump's isolation prevented easy access to markets, but the Moapa Valley was served by both a modern highway and a railroad. The Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad was about 30 miles from the Pahrump Valley, but this did not

help much since the railroad ran south into southern California, serving a market that was earlier and warmer; thus the Pahrump Valley could not be competitive in vegetables and farm crops. Further, the flush days of mining in Johnnie, Beatty, Rhyolite, and Death Valley, where Pahrump once had ready markets, had long since passed. Mining activity had caused Pahrump's land prices to become inflated to a level realistic by former market conditions, but unrealistic and counterproductive in terms of valley development and the economics of the 1930s. The report went on to recommend a farming system "based primarily on beef or hogs or both as the type best suited to the economic conditions surrounding the valley" (Venstrom, 1932:82). Moreover, it added a caveat to this recommendation, noting that most of the artesian heads in the valley were too small for many livestock farms, so that development would necessarily lag behind the Moapa Valley unless "some suitable intensive crops can be found" for which there was a reliable market (Venstrom, 1932:83). Ironically, just a few years later, the first modern experiments with such a "suitable intensive crop" were to begin. Before this happened, however, another effort at colonization was proposed.

### Another Colonization Plan

In 1932, another short-lived scheme for the colonization of the Pahrump Valley surfaced. The construction of Hoover Dam near Las Vegas was underway, and ranchers in the vicinity of St. Thomas in the Moapa Valley were well aware that some farm lands in their area would be inundated by waters backed up by the dam. Flood waters from the dam would eventually necessitate the removal of all thirty-eight farms at St. Thomas and a few from Overton. The total was 900 harvested acres, or one-third of the irrigated area of the Muddy River Valley (Venstrom, 1932:54). Affected farmers therefore began casting about for other farm lands to which they could move. Many hoped that a large block of farm land could be obtained and that the displaced community could be moved more or less intact ("Clark County Ranchers..." 1932). The search involved finding a location with good quality soil, water in sufficient quantities, and a satisfactory price.

With all its land and water, the Pahrump Valley was an obvious choice. The Moapa ranchers were working through the Lauren W. Gibbs Co. of Salt Lake City, which held an option on Pahrump property at a price that was low enough to make the deal a possibility. The land held in option was the Pahrump Ranch, owned by the Pahrump Land Company. One of the principals in the company was Isadore B. Dockweiler, a Democratic Party leader in California politics ("Clark County Ranchers..." 1932; "Pahrump Valley Notes," 1936c). In addition to ranchers from St. Thomas, others from Mesquite, Bunkerville, and Littlefield were said to be interested in the scheme, and representatives from all sections made an inspection trip to the Pahrump Valley in the spring of 1932. Nearly fifty individuals from the communities had signified an interest in the project, but like previous valley colonization schemes, there were no results.

### A Dude Ranch

Despite the failure of yet another colonization scheme, there was no shortage of ideas for using the valley's abundant resources. Following the passage of laws in the spring of 1931 legalizing gaming and reducing the residency requirement for a divorce in Nevada from three months to six weeks, dude ranches sprang up in many areas of the state catering to those who wished to spend their residency for divorce in a more bucolic setting. These ranches were especially prevalent in the Reno and Las Vegas areas, and some, such as the old Kyle Ranch in North Las Vegas, were very popular.

The idea seemed sound, and an effort was made to create such an enterprise in Pahrump. It was known as the Pahrump Valley Dude Ranch and was located at the Pahrump Ranch. It operated during the mid-1930s and was run by Lois Deimel and her husband, Ed. The Deimels, easterners of considerable means, were friends of Dockweiler and had learned of the ranch through him. They moved to Pahrump's dry climate because Ed suffered from tuberculosis (he died not long after their move) (Fleming, 1988). Lois Deimel was assemblywoman elect in 1936 for Nye County ("Big Cotton Company into Pahrump," 1936).

Many guests came from southern California, but some were from as far away as New York City ("Pahrump Valley Notes," 1936a). There was little investment in facilities for the dude ranch, but a fieldstone swimming pool was constructed close to one of the large springs on the property ("Pahrump Pool Has Beautiful Setting," 1936). Squire Knolls, a California artist who had spent four years in Port Au Prince, Haiti, while writing a book on voodooism and drawing sketches, was a guest in 1936, and he entertained patrons with his original piano compositions ("Pahrump Valley Notes," 1936a). George Young, Jr., dean of the College of Architecture at Cornell University, was a guest in 1936 and was said to be "enthusiastic over the historic charm of the place" ("Eastern Architect Visits at Pahrump," 1936). Long-time Pahrump Valley residents report that the dude ranch was more talk than fact, however (Arnold, 1988). Throughout, the Pahrump Ranch remained a working operation. George Ishmael, a man well known throughout southern Nye County, with roots in Beatty and the Amargosa Valley, was the foreman during this period.

Meanwhile, the other major property in the valley changed hands. In 1936 Dr. H. D. Cornell, a nose and throat specialist from San Diego, California, purchased the Manse Ranch and took immediate possession ("Pahrump Valley Notes," 1936b).

## CHAPTER 4

### Land Use in the Pahrump Valley

For many years one of the largest holdings of private land in the Pahrump Valley has been the Hidden Hills Ranch, which straddles the Nevada-California border near the highway linking the Pahrump Valley with the Resting Springs Ranch and Tecopa, California. At present, some 1250 acres of the ranch are located in Nevada; the rest are in California. A vast parcel of land, at one time encompassing nearly 18,000 acres but more recently 14,400 acres, Hidden Hills Ranch has for many years been under the control of Roland Wiley, a Las Vegas attorney.

#### Wiley Acquires Hidden Hills Ranch

Wiley was born in Iowa in 1904, attended school in Iowa and the University of Wisconsin, and was graduated from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where he obtained a law degree in 1927. Soon after graduation he traveled to California to visit relatives and stopped in Las Vegas. Because of his time spent in Washington, Wiley was familiar with federal government plans to construct Boulder Dam near Las Vegas. Although construction had not begun, he recognized that the giant project would stimulate growth in the small city.

He had read in the Las Vegas Review that Las Vegas would be a good place for a professional person to get started. He moved to Las Vegas and became a member of the Nevada bar in 1929. He is one of the longest standing members of that bar.

Wiley served as district attorney for Clark County during the tumultuous growth the Las Vegas area experienced because of the construction of the Basic Magnesium facility at Henderson, the development of the Las Vegas Air Base, and the establishment of the first casinos on the Las Vegas Strip. He also ran for governor of Nevada twice, both times unsuccessfully—in 1942 against Ted Carville and in 1950 against Vail Pittman.

Although Wiley recounted numerous opportunities to make major investments in real estate in the Las Vegas Valley, which would have paid off in staggering profits, he long ago demonstrated a penchant for real estate investments in the Pahrump Valley. Wiley explained,

*I never liked the Las Vegas Valley, because it was hard pan and sandy gravel, and over in the Pahrump Valley, it's all good American soil, you know, agricultural soil. Being an Iowa farm boy, why, I put more value to that land; less value here [Las Vegas] (Wiley, 1988).*

Wiley's first trip to the Pahrump Valley was in a professional capacity. Between 1920 and the early 1930s, three homesteads and a Desert Land Act parcel had been transferred from federal to private hands in the area where Nye County's southernmost tip meets Clark County (see U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 1988). John Yount, son of pioneer Joseph Yount, had earlier taken up one of the homesteads, and he had also acquired homesteads obtained by two men, a Mr. Wilson and a Mr. Rose. Combined, the three parcels amounted to 500 acres; on this and surrounding government lands, Yount ran cattle.

Yount had been married to an Indian woman. At some point after her death, he lived with a woman who became known as Belle Yount. John and Belle, it seemed, had always intended to get married, but somehow never made it. When John died in the early 1930s, he had heirs in the Redlands and Riverside areas of California who hired a lawyer, Frank McNamee, to represent their interests. Belle Yount came to Wiley and asked him to determine whether she was Yount's common-law wife. When Wiley asked Belle why she had never married John, she replied, "Well, we went to town many times to get married, but we always ended up at a bawdy house and got drunk" (Wiley, 1988).

His efforts to determine Belle Yount's marital status first took Wiley to Pahrump Valley. The trip took 3-1/2 hours and necessitated driving to Goodsprings, then through Mesquite Valley, as it was then called (it is now known as Sandy Valley), then north into the Pahrump Valley to the Hidden Hills Ranch, then known as the Hidden Ranch of John Yount. Travel to the Hidden Hills Ranch up Highway 95 through Indian Springs, Wiley explained, took 4-1/2 hours. Wiley recalled that, at the time, about 1939, the Manse Ranch was vacant and under foreclosure on a \$15,000 note and the Pahrump Ranch could have been purchased a short time later for \$100,000 (Wiley, 1988).

Yount's Hidden Ranch was not extensively developed. The primary structure was a 20x24-foot cabin with a foundation consisting of a few stones on the corners and walls constructed of 2x4s on 4-foot centers, placed on their sides so that the walls were 2 inches thick instead of 4. Board and batten formed the walls on the outside, with paneling on the inside. Yount had planted cottonwood trees, which have since died. At one time he had planted alfalfa on the property, but much of it had died because the water was so close to the surface. When Belle Yount came to Wiley, there were about 400 head of cattle on the ranch, and they were in poor condition because of the lack of good feed. Wiley could not establish Belle's relationship as a common-law wife, and he advised her to buy out the interests of the other heirs.

She followed his advice, but it was clear to Wiley that Belle did not really want the ranch and was only buying out the heirs to protect her own interests. Belle suggested that Wiley buy the property from her. Wiley says Belle looked him in the eye and said, "There's more there than meets the eye; you should own it" (Wiley, 1988). Wiley believed that she had no motive to give him bad advice. "I've got a right to use my head and listen to people," Wiley stated. "If I look a man in the eye and tell him to do something, he'd better listen. And when he looks me in the eye and tells me that, and it serves my interests, I listen, too" (Wiley, 1988). The conversation between Belle and Wiley took place in 1936.

When Wiley purchased the ranch from Belle Yount, Dora Brown, the daughter of Philander Lee, occupied the ranch with her son Steve. In 1941 Wiley took possession of the property and spent most of his weekends there since. When he moved in, Steve Brown and his mother moved a few miles north of the Yount cabin where there were a few small cottages and a spring, and they continued to live there for many years. The spot was a pleasant area, with trees and plants of many kinds forming a sharp contrast to the desert. Eventually that little oasis, including the cabins, trees and springs, was destroyed and all surface soil washed away in a flash flood (Wiley, 1988).

Wiley changed the name from Hidden Ranch to Hidden Hills Ranch because its little hills, box canyons, mesa, and bench lands are not visible from the Tecopa road, less than a mile

away. One of the first things Wiley did when he moved onto the ranch was attempt to upgrade the road to Good-springs. Previously, fresnos—graders usually pulled by horses but sometimes by tractors—had been used to improve the dirt roads, but in 1941 Wiley brought the first motorized road grader into the Pahrump Valley and bladed the road from Sandy Valley to the ranch. Tiring of the long, dusty round-trip drive from Las Vegas every weekend, Wiley eventually constructed an airstrip only one-third of a mile from the house, and for many years he made his weekly commute by air, driving to the valley only when he needed to transport large amounts of supplies.

Over the ensuing years the Wiley trust expanded its holdings of the ranch. In the early 1940s he gave, without any consideration, 80 acres in Lee Canyon in the Charleston Mountains to the U.S. Forest Service. He recalls, with no regret, that he could have easily traded his forest property for land in the Las Vegas Valley, perhaps as much as two sections.

In the 1950s he raised 5000 pheasants a year for hunting on the ranch. Although his Pahrump holdings diminished somewhat (he sold parcels to Preferred Equities and others in the 1970s), in 1989 the Wiley trust was by far the largest private land holder in the valley, and his property represented an immense source of future land and community development.

Wiley has used his holdings in the Pahrump Valley as a refuge from the hustle and stress of city life as well as an investment. His status as a true desert individualist becomes most evident in his work on his Cathedral Canyon. A short distance from his home at the Hidden Hills Ranch, just off the Tecopa highway, Wiley modified a lovely canyon, which ranges from a few to 200 to 300 feet wide and perhaps 50 to 60 feet deep, as an artist would use paint and canvas to express his personal vision of life and nature. He constructed a trail up the canyon, along which are chairs and benches for people to use as they stop and contemplate the surroundings. Statues and other works of art have been placed along the trail and in the niches on the cliffs. Along the trail are steel-framed messages with quotes and poems expressing Wiley's philosophy of life and advice for living, both religious and secular. A 200-foot suspension bridge spans the canyon; the site is wired throughout and is lighted every night—the best time to see the attraction—so close to Las Vegas, but visually so different. Wiley bears the expense for the entire project and admission is free. Cathedral Canyon is a special place for the humanity it expresses and for the philosophy of a longtime Pahrump Valley resident (Wiley, 1988). The Old Spanish/Mormon Trail running from Mountain Springs to Stump Spring 3 miles distant skirts the south end of the Hidden Hills Ranch and is still visible near the head of Cathedral Canyon. Famous southern Nevada Indian renegade Queho, whose body was found in a cave along the Colorado River in the early 1940s, is buried in a grave on a hill near the canyon (Wiley, 1989).

### Three Distinct Uses of the Land in the 1940s

With its abundance of land and water, the Pahrump Valley has been used by man to sustain life. For thousands of years the Southern Paiute Indians and their ancestors made fruitful use of the valley's land, water, native plants, and animals. Later the Indians were the first to recognize the valley's agricultural potential when they grew their traditional native crops, including corn and squash (and conceivably even cotton) near the springs.

When the first ranchers arrived in Pahrump, they used the land in a way that was very different from the Indians; they grew alfalfa and grain to feed livestock, primarily cattle. They

also grew fruits and vegetables for their own consumption and to sell locally to miners. When the mining era passed, the market for fruits and vegetables declined, and the ranchers returned more to the raising of grains, alfalfa, and cattle.

By 1945, three relatively distinct land-use patterns were evident in Pahrump. First, there was the traditional raising of alfalfa, grains, and livestock, supplemented by fruits and vegetables for home use, on the Pahrump and Manse ranches. The Raycraft Ranch, which was being farmed by Stanley Ford, illustrates the second pattern. Ford, a descendant of Wisconsin dairy farmers, took the pattern of farming he had grown up with in Wisconsin and adapted it to the Pahrump Valley. He did not grow alfalfa and grains to feed beef cattle, but instead focused his efforts on dairy cattle. Most of the feed he grew was consumed by his own cows to produce milk and other dairy products, which he sold in Tecopa, Shoshone, and Furnace Creek, as well as in Las Vegas. In addition, he raised poultry and sold eggs, chickens, and turkeys. He maintained a garden for household use as any Wisconsin dairyman would.

Frank "Pop" Buol used the land in a third way. He apparently had no background in farming, and he was not interested in beef or dairy cattle or in raising alfalfa and grain. Instead, he focused his efforts on what might be called orchard products such as fruits and nuts; and he raised grapes, from which he produced wine. He supplemented his income from these products with a small store, the only one in Pahrump for a time, and he also ran the small post office. Perry Bowman called Buol a "gentleman farmer."

None of these patterns represents a better use of the land than another. Each required outside markets for the sale of products, but different concepts were involved concerning what the land could produce and how the products should be marketed.

By 1948 a new and more economically productive use for the land became apparent to valley residents. Leon Hughes proved that cotton could be successfully grown in Pahrump. His demonstration opened a new era in Pahrump's history, an era predicated on a different and more economically viable use for the land than had previously been known.

## The Kellogg Ranch

Lois Kellogg was the daughter of Russian immigrants who had achieved great wealth. A New York City debutante, she was an heir to the fortune associated with the Kellogg Communication Equipment Company, a major corporation that produced hand-crank telephones. (Accounts of Kellogg's background vary. Another one stated that she was a widow who came originally from England and her relatives there provided her with a \$25,000 annual allotment [V. Hafen et al., 1965-1966].) She was an attractive woman with a pleasing personality, by all accounts, who enjoyed the outdoors. She rebelled against her family and moved to Palm Springs, California. Finding Palm Springs too confining, she purchased the Arlemont Ranch in Fish Lake Valley in Esmeralda County; and later, in 1939, she purchased a large block of land in the south end of the Pahrump Valley adjoining the Manse Ranch, which came to be known as the Kellogg Ranch (M. Hafen. 1988a). Most of the land was purchased from the state of Nevada (V. Hafen et al., 1965-1966). The Kellogg Ranch was located partially in Nye County and partially in Clark County.

Kellogg was interested in growing grain—specifically, barley—and hay and raising cattle on her Pahrump property. She drilled wells and actually did raise some barley. There was little

flowing water on her ranch, and she constructed her home near a small spring, with agricultural waters being supplied by wells (Bowman, 1988). The agricultural wells that she drilled were still producing in 1989, and since they were never cased below 200 feet, Tim Hafen believed they may be among the best wells in the valley; they are the least likely to deteriorate because of rust (M. Hafen, 1988a). Long-time residents recall that when she brought in her first artesian well, water shot nearly 50 feet in the air because of the tremendous pressure (Fleming, 1988).

Louis Sharpe, a local man who was part Southern Paiute, was her foreman. Kellogg installed, at considerable expense, a facility for rolling barley grain. She planned to build a grain-processing mill that was steam-powered; most of the equipment was never sold and remained on the property for years. When he moved onto the property in 1951, Tim Hafen found a set of architectural plans in a wood-framed, metal building that were designed by F. L. Wright of Beverly Hills, California. Though the plans have been lost, Hafen has always wondered if this was not Frank Lloyd Wright, since Lois Kellogg would have had access to such a renowned architect. She was then in her late 30s, and though a small woman, she would truck cattle raised on her property to Los Angeles alone, over dirt roads as far as Baker. She would sleep in the truck or in the open air beside the truck in her bedroll (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Lois Kellogg died before the farm became really productive. (Productivity may have not been her goal, however. Harry Ford recalled one crop of barley that was never harvested because Kellogg found the standing grain so beautiful [Ford, 1989]). There are slightly varying versions of her death, but all agree that she raised Russian wolfhound dogs that she loved—she had more than 50 at her Fish Lake Valley residence—and that the dogs passed tularemia to her, perhaps through a bite. One version reports that the dogs were fighting and that in the process of separating them she was bitten and contracted the deadly disease and died in the early 1940s (M. Hafen, 1988a). The community's great distance from medical help may have been a factor in her death, although tularemia was often fatal in the days before modern antibiotics. After Lois Kellogg's death, the Kellogg Ranch was incorporated as part of the giant Manse Ranch by Dr. H. D. Cornell (Bowman, 1988; V. Hafen et al., 1965-1966).

### Stanley Ford and Dairy Cattle

Stanley Ford was born in Wisconsin in 1902 to a family of dairy farmers who had homesteaded in that state. The cold Wisconsin winters did not agree with Ford, and in 1925 he loaded his wife and daughter into an old Model-T Ford and moved to southern California. There he founded a trucking business that prospered until the Great Depression wiped it out. Farming was in his blood, and he tried homesteading near Searchlight, Nevada. When that did not work out, he started a small ranch near Needles, California. When World War II broke out, he moved to the Yermo-Barstow area of California and worked on government jobs until 1944 (Ford, 1988). In 1944 he heard about the Pahrump Valley and its abundant artesian waters, so he moved. Initially he located on property now known as the Basin Ranch, but when wells being drilled did not prove out, he located on the Raycraft Ranch, where he spent the next eight years (Ford, 1988).

The Raycraft Ranch had been owned by W. Brougher, who had served as Nye County sheriff from 1887 to 1891 when the county seat was located in Belmont. (W. Brougher is probably Wilse Brougher, a Belmont merchant and partner with Jim Butler and Tasker Oddie in

the development of the first mining claims in Tonopah in 1900. Pictures of Wilse Brougher following Tonopah's founding show him to be an older man [Metscher, 1989].) Brougher's daughter Ida married Jim Raycraft and Brougher gave the ranch to the couple as a wedding present about 1910. The Raycrafts moved to Pahrump and constructed a large, spacious home with 10-foot-high ceilings; the lumber was taken from buildings at the town of Johnnie, about 16 miles north of Pahrump. The Raycrafts raised a family in the home before moving to Oakland, California (Ford, 1988).

Ford and his family moved onto the Raycraft place as sharecroppers, and he supplemented his income by hauling mail from the Johnnie Siding once a week for delivery in Pahrump. There were a number of sheep on the property, which Ford quickly sold off. The Fords always kept dairy cattle, sometimes as many as 20 head. Though it was illegal during World War II, they sold butter in Shoshone and Tecopa, sometimes as much as 100 pounds a month, for as much as \$1 a pound. The market was good in the Shoshone-Tecopa area because the big Noonday lead mine and area talc mines were in operation. Hattie Ford hand-churned the butter. At first Ford milked by hand, then purchased a David-Bradley milking machine with a gasoline-powered vacuum pump. Milk was also run through a hand-operated separator, and cream was hauled to the Rancho Grande Creamery in Las Vegas, where sweet cream brought a higher price than sour cream. Ford also raised chickens and turkeys for market. One year he furnished about 30 turkeys for a Thanksgiving turkey shoot at Tecopa (Ford, 1988).

Life on the Raycraft property involved hard work from sunup until sundown. Horse-drawn farming equipment was used to produce hay for the dairy cattle and grain for the chickens and turkeys. Work with the livestock and in the fields was primarily the responsibility of Mr. Ford. The women's hard duties included laundry on one day a week and ironing on another. Mrs. Ford washed with a gas-powered washing machine. She always helped milk the cows and processed the cream in the cookshack (Ford, 1988).

The community was still small at this time and the cooperation among residents so evident during the early days was still strong. People worked together and helped each other out. At least once a week, someone would go to town to purchase groceries, and they would always shop for others in the community. People enjoyed each other and liked to get together (Ford, 1988).

Stanley Ford was a jack-of-all-trades and in addition to his duties as a farmer, he drilled wells and was also the valley barber. He had a barber chair and hand clippers and every three or four weeks he and his family, with other valley residents, would be invited to one home, usually the Pahrump Ranch or the Manse Ranch. Ford would take his barber chair and clippers along and spend the day cutting people's hair. Guests would bring a dish or pie or cake and everyone would enjoy a pot-luck dinner (Ford, 1988).

As Ford's son Harry grew, he was expected to help his father with work on the farm. Yet childhood on the farm was a special world, which included swimming in the springs and hunting with his .22 rifle, for which he paid \$8 and for which his mother allowed him one shell a day. There were ducks on the ponds and rabbits and quail year round, and no game wardens. The ponds held frogs, tadpoles, and carp 2 feet long. The children used to reach back into holes under the banks in the ponds and streams and grab fish by hand. "Anything that wiggled, you grabbed it," Harry Ford remembered. "When you got hold of a fish 12 inches long, he really put up a fight." A special treat was to sneak over to the Pahrump Ranch where the ponds were

larger and the adventures even more attractive. Ford recalled that there was usually a white boy or two to play with, but most of his pals were Indian children (Ford, 1988).

### Frank Buol's Winery and Store

Frank "Pop" Buol was brother to Peter Buol, who was the first mayor of Las Vegas. He settled in the Pahrump Valley during the early 1900s. It is quite possible that he entered southern Nevada as a surveyor, sent to the area to survey the Spring Mountain Range for timber (Ford, 1988; Fleming, 1988). After completing his job in the Spring Mountains, he might have walked into the Pahrump Valley, finding a place where he wanted to spend the rest of his life. He drilled one of the first wells in the valley and had a small farm with numerous fruit trees and a vineyard. Buol was a colorful man and has been described as a real pack rat and a "scholarly" individual (M. Hafen, 1988a). His house was packed with old magazines and newspapers, stacked from the floor to the ceiling almost from wall to wall, with only passageways among the stacks.

As late as the middle 1940s, there was an old steam-powered drilling rig on Buol's property with which he had drilled his wells. He did not raise alfalfa or grain on his property and did not keep livestock, aside from an occasional pig, which he would let run through his orchard to clean up fruit that had dropped off the trees. Then in the fall he would butcher the pig (Ford, 1988).

Buol was most famous for the wine he produced; he is said to have had either the first or second licensed winery in the state of Nevada (M. Hafen, 1988a). He produced about 1100 gallons a year, and he supplied his vintage to the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles (Fleming, 1988). While his store was still operating, Buol was visited by federal agents who questioned him about his wine making. One version of the outcome is that the alcoholic content of his wine was too high, and he was forced to stop. After losing his license he continued to make some wine, much of it for his own consumption. He told valley residents that he drank a quart a day (Ford, 1988). Whenever Buol had guests he would break out the bottle, saving his better wines for those he liked the best. Buol maintained a regular, fully equipped winery on his property, and it remained intact under the Binion ownership of the property. The winery was accessible through a tiny door, which Buol called his "jail." It was an adobe block building with a large wood heater and contained the press, barrels, and other equipment he needed to make wine. Harry Ford remembered Buol selling a 500-gallon wine barrel when Ford was young. Buol maintained little wine cellars dug into the sand hills around his property, in which he stored barrels of wine. Years after the ranch was sold, bulldozers were used to level some of the sand hills and workers discovered stored barrels of wine. It is possible that caches still exist (Ford, 1988).

For several decades, Pop Buol ran a small store on his property, which he closed about 1946. He continued living in Pahrump for several years after the store was closed, but moved to Tonopah in the mid-1950s to be with relatives. Buol's ranch was purchased by a woman named Sully, who recognized that his houseful of artifacts and antiques would be of value. She is said to have bought the property at a low price and then advertised it in the Wall Street Journal. The property was soon purchased by a man named Doby Doc Caudill (Ford, 1988).

Among Pop Buol's possessions was a beaver tail, which he said came from the Spring Mountain Range when he first came to southern Nevada. He also had several old wagons and a Model-A station wagon, which he always kept in an old building on the property. Residents remember that the station wagon always seemed like new, and that Buol used it to go to town to purchase supplies (Ford, 1988).

## Cotton Comes to Pahrump

No one can say when the first cotton was grown in the Pahrump Valley. It is possible that the Anasazi Indians might have tried growing it near the valley's springs 1000 or more years ago; the Southern Paiute may also have experimented with it. It is known that in 1917 the Pahrump Valley Company, the owner of the Pahrump Ranch under Isadore B. Dockweiler, announced its intention to plant 200 acres of cotton on the ranch the next spring. Dockweiler recognized that the valley had the right climatic conditions for growing cotton and had an abundance of water from large, flowing springs and wells. In 1917, the company also prepared to raise subtropical fruits and early vegetables on the ranch for the markets in the mining towns of Nevada ("Will Plant Cotton," 1917).

The success of this first modern cotton-growing effort in Pahrump is unknown. No further reference to it has been found in the early newspapers. It is very possible that it was a failure, for, as we will see, although cotton will grow in the Pahrump Valley, it will not thrive on raw ground. If the Pahrump Valley Company planted its first crop on newly claimed ground, it is little wonder the valley had to wait another twenty years before someone else would take a chance on cotton.

The first well-documented effort at growing cotton in the Pahrump Valley began in 1936. At this time John R. Hughes from Porterville, California, moved onto the Pahrump Ranch with his wife and children. Hughes and his associates, the Anderson-Clayton Company, one of the largest cotton concerns in the world, operating in California as the San Joaquin Cotton Oil Company, purchased the Pahrump Ranch for \$135,000 ("Big Cotton Company into Pahrump," 1936; Hughes, 1988). Hughes originally was from Texas, where he worked with teams of horses in the oil fields. In 1926 he moved to the San Joaquin Valley in California and became involved in growing cotton. In 1929, he was involved in a cotton-growing venture in Arizona; but when this failed, he returned to the San Joaquin Valley.

He first heard about Pahrump from friends in Porterville, California, who sometimes hauled cattle and sheep out of the Pahrump Valley. They told stories of large amounts of available land, cheap water, and a relatively mild climate. Their stories aroused his interest and Hughes drove to Pahrump to see it for himself (Hughes, 1988). He subsequently bought the 11,920-acre Pahrump Ranch, at that time one of the largest undivided properties in the West. Hughes and his associates purchased the ranch from the Pahrump Valley Company, headed by Isadore B. Dockweiler and associates, including Paul Shoup of the Board of Directors of the Southern Pacific Railroad and Jack Shoup, an agent for Associated Oil Company (Hughes, 1988). Dockweiler and his associates had held the ranch since the early 1900s, perhaps as a diversion and tax write-off. Much of the enlargement and consolidation of the ranch took place under the Pahrump Valley Company. Wilse Brougher, for example, Nye County sheriff from 1887 to 1891, owned a parcel of land where the golf course in Pahrump is now located and it was surrounded

by the Pahrump Valley Company holdings. Prior to 1910, the company traded Brougher land outside its own ranch for Brougher's new parcel inside the Pahrump company's, and Brougher's parcel became known as the Raycraft Ranch (Hughes, 1989).

Leon Hughes, one of the sons of John R. Hughes, was a teenager when the family moved to the Pahrump Valley. When asked to recall what the valley looked like in 1936, Hughes described it:

*Well, the only way I'd know to describe it, is if you'd go out to one of these mesquite thickets where you can't see any buildings or anything; that's what the whole thing looked like. There was nothing here. There were 3 or 4 buildings on the Manse Ranch, a lot of buildings on the Pahrump Ranch, 1 or 2 on the Raycraft Ranch, Frank Buol had a little winery, but there was absolutely nothing here. There weren't over 20 people; there were a lot more Indians than white people (Hughes, 1988).*

Hughes recalled two stores in the valley. One, at Frank Buol's place, carried a few canned goods and staples such as flour, but no perishables. Buol's store was really more of an emergency food source than anything else; it was mostly patronized by prospectors, who were fairly numerous in the hills at that time, with a fair amount of activity at Johnnie. The other store, located on the Pahrump Ranch, was operated by Ed Deimel. It was said to have originally been a saloon and dated back to before the turn of the century (Hughes, 1988). Possibly it was the same building where Charles Bennett and Aaron Winters operated saloons on the Pahrump Ranch.

Hughes recalled that upon moving to the Pahrump Ranch his father bought a light plant so that the family could have a refrigerator and other conveniences, but before long, the plant "blew up" and his father could see no future in fixing it. Thereafter, the family lived without refrigeration or coolers, lacking all the modern conveniences they had been accustomed to in the San Joaquin Valley.

Roads had been an unending problem and remained so in 1936. Hughes stated that the trip to Las Vegas included "29 miles of tire-bustin' boulders," before a traveler connected with Highway 95 in the Amargosa Valley. The road was paved from Shoshone to Baker, but there were no paved roads in the valley and Hughes remembered his father going through ten to fifteen tires a year. At that time there was another "road" to Las Vegas, up Trout Canyon and down through Redrock, but it was no more than a wagon trail and often was washed out. One could also reach Las Vegas via Sandy Valley and Goodsprings, but it was more than a four-hour trip from the Pahrump Ranch.

Social life in the valley was scant and people lived in isolation. Hughes recalled four or five families living on the Pahrump Ranch, two families on the Manse, one on the Raycraft Ranch, and Frank Buol on his place. There were also one or two "homesteaders" in the valley who had very small operations. Those wanting to dance had to go to Beatty, Shoshone, or Baker. The valley had a small school with one teacher. Ed Fleming was the teacher for two years beginning in 1938 and he had fourteen students—four Indians and ten whites. The Rose School District paid him \$1,800 a year, and he took his meals with Pop Buol (Fleming, 1988). The name of the Rose School District was suggested by Lois Deimel in honor of Rose W. Shoup, a former

teacher, and Herbert Rose, who came to the valley in 1892 and served on the school board for many years ("Pahrump Valley Notes," 1936c).

It was long recognized that a quicker and shorter route to Las Vegas was essential for the development of the valley. During the 1930s, considerable effort was expended in constructing a road over the Spring Mountains. The route seems to have been up to Mountain Springs, following the old Mormon Trail (Fleming, 1988). Apparently a fairly large crew of W.P.A. labor was used in constructing the road, but it was years before the route was truly usable.

When John R. Hughes took over the Pahrump Ranch in 1936, he continued to plant 200 or 300 acres in grain and alfalfa. In the spring of 1937 he planted about 600 acres of cotton. The results were both enlightening and devastating, and, for all intents and purposes, bankrupted Hughes. The cotton seeds germinated, but most "got mouse-eared and turned blue, and didn't amount to anything" (Hughes, 1988). Hughes had planted most of his cotton on newly cleared, virgin land, but he also planted a small amount on land that had been in alfalfa. He found that the cotton planted on virgin ground did not thrive, but that cotton planted where alfalfa had been growing produced abundantly. The virgin soil had salt in it and very little humus; it took an alfalfa crop or a grain crop a couple of years to leach out some of the salt and set a little humus in the soil for the deeper-rooted cotton plants. Once this had been done, the cotton plants grew vigorously. Unfortunately for Hughes, he learned that lesson too late. He had expended most of his bankroll in planting the first cotton crop (Hughes, 1988).

Hughes had also gone into raising hogs, and the hogs completed the ruin of his Pahrump venture. In 1938 he had 2000 head of healthy hogs 60 days from market. He had gone to Los Angeles and borrowed money on the hogs, using that money to purchase 129 head of cows, each with a calf, for \$29 per unit. Everything was going well, with feed for the animals being raised on the ranch, when cholera hit the herd. Within two weeks only 28 head of the original 2000 hogs were alive. It seemed that someone in the San Joaquin Valley had sold Hughes some hogs with cholera, which he had brought back to the ranch; the cholera spread and destroyed his herd (Hughes, 1988). Without the hogs, Hughes was forced to sell the cows to pay off his note, and the only thing left was a herd of horses, which he traded in California. Meanwhile, George Ishmael was grazing a herd of cattle on Hughes' pasture. Hughes agreed to run the cattle in the hills for Ishmael for half the calves, and he managed to survive for a while longer, but, as with his Arizona experience, he was forced to move back to Porterville, California, broke, having lost \$250,000 in Pahrump (Hughes, 1988).

John Hughes lost the Pahrump Ranch, which returned to Dockweiler and his associates. The ranch was then leased to the Van Horns, dairymen from Bakersfield. Unfortunately, the Van Horns had no capital and were unable to make a go of it. As Hughes said, "They came broke and left broke." In 1948, John Hughes' son, Leon, then a grown man, returned to the Pahrump Valley. There was "something about Pahrump that got in my blood, and I didn't want to leave," Hughes explained. He and his partner, Vern Schwartz, rented 120 acres from Elmer Bowman, who had purchased the Manse Ranch from Dr. Cornell in 1946. By this time, according to Hughes, the Manse Ranch had grown to about six sections. In addition, other farmers were being attracted to the valley, among them the Simkins brothers at the north end. "What are you going to do with it [the rented land]?" Elmer Bowman asked Hughes in 1948.

"I'm going to grow cotton," Hughes replied.

"Do you think you can grow cotton here?" Bowman asked.

"I know damn well I can, if I get a chance," Hughes answered (Hughes, 1988).

Hughes knew cotton would grow well in the right soil; he had seen his father do it. He rented 120 acres of alfalfa ground from Bowman and produced cotton crops in 1948 and 1949. The crops that he produced were quite good and his success demonstrated to the others that the Pahrump Valley could be productive in cotton. In a short period of time, most of the ranchers and farmers in the valley began growing cotton.

At this time Hughes became associated with another innovation of which valley residents still speak. He picked his first crop with mechanical cotton pickers, but it had to be trucked to California for ginning, since there was no gin in the valley. Ordinarily cotton is loosely packed in cotton wagons and the wagons are towed to the gin. It would have been highly impractical to transport the cotton to California in such wagons, and ranchers found that when they tried to pack the cotton loosely on a truck it was impossible to get a load that would make the trip worthwhile. Hughes devised a system whereby cotton would be fed into a hay baler, compressed and packed, and then tied; the heavy bales would then be trucked to the cotton gin (Hughes, 1988). While some said that such packing would ruin the cotton, causing it to get hot and spoil, reducing its grade and the price a farmer could obtain for it, experience proved just the opposite; compacting the cotton did not reduce the cotton's quality; if anything, it enhanced it. Farmers in the valley still speak with great pride of this cotton bailing innovation (Blosser, 1988).

More wells were drilled as the cotton boom in the Pahrump Valley got underway. However, concern was expressed in Las Vegas that extensive drilling in the Pahrump Valley might lessen the artesian flow in the Las Vegas Valley. Las Vegans realized, however, that there was nothing they could do to stop the drilling as long as the state engineer issued permits for the development of water resources for "beneficial use" (Jones and Cahlan, 1975:Vol. I, 139).

### The Bowmans Purchase the Manse Ranch

Dr. H. D. Cornell was a southern California physician who had purchased the Manse Ranch in the late 1930s after it had been abandoned for a time (Bowman, 1988). The ranch's abandonment was probably related to the economy and the lack of readily available markets following closure of the mines in the Pahrump region (Bowman, 1988). Dr. Cornell purchased the ranch, consisting of 2000 acres, for approximately \$20,000. While he owned it, he expanded his holdings to 6700 acres, mainly by the purchase of the Kellogg Ranch (Bowman, 1988).

Elmer S. Bowman, who purchased the Manse Ranch in 1946 from Dr. Cornell, had heard of its availability from a Las Vegas banker. Elmer Bowman was the son of William C. Bowman, a freighter-merchant who built one of the first mercantile stores in Moapa around 1900 (Nevada: The Silver State, 1970:272). Elmer married Elizabeth Leavitt, a native of Bunkerville. Her grandfather was Dudley Leavitt, a man of considerable strength and vitality who was constantly being sent to the edge of civilization by the Mormon Church as it developed and expanded its interests south of Salt Lake City. Leavitt had worked at Potosi in the late 1850s with Jacob Hamblin; they were once forced to walk from Las Vegas meadows to St. George, Utah, because Indians had stolen their horses (Bowman, 1988).

While in Moapa, Elmer Bowman was involved in a number of business ventures including trucking. By the early 1930s he was in the dairy business, providing milk for Las Vegas, where construction of Hoover Dam had begun (Bowman, 1988). At the age of 19, Perry, Bowman's older son, established his own dairy in the Moapa Valley. But times were not easy. By the early 1940s, land in the valley had been split into small parcels, which made it difficult for a farmer to get a unit large enough to work (Bowman, 1989).

In 1942, Elmer Bowman hauled hay out of Pahrump to Las Vegas. By the middle 1940s he had decided to leave Moapa and move to Pahrump where plenty of land and water were available, and where he could establish a large dairy. Bowman talked his son Perry and two daughters and sons-in-law (the Frehner and Christensen families) into moving to Pahrump with him. Initially they were interested in land owned by Ray Van Horn at the north end of the valley, but when they learned that the Manse Ranch was available, they moved there. The Bowmans were impressed by the water and the soil. Soil in Pahrump is tight compared to that in the Moapa Valley, and though plants start slowly, they grow well if they have a good start. Elmer and Perry were followed to the valley by other members of the family. At first the ranch was operated as one large family farm, but gradually portions of the ranch were split off as various family members went their own way (Bowman, 1988).

The Bowmans' first years in the valley were not easy. "Pahrump was very tough," Perry Bowman remembered (Bowman, 1988). At the time they moved to Pahrump it had been years since any farming activities had been fully successful. Out-of-state money often subsidized operations (Bowman, 1988). Schooling for their children was not available and the first year he lived there, Perry Bowman's daughter stayed with grandparents in Moapa to attend school. Moreover, Mormons were viewed as outsiders by the "gentiles" in the community. Still, Elmer Bowman and his family persevered and quickly improved their property, constructing several new homes and outbuildings and bringing virgin land into cultivation. Bowman and other Mormons had a slight farming advantage over farmers who arrived later from California because agricultural techniques and practices that worked in Moapa seemed generally to be more effective in Pahrump than practices common in the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys in California (Bowman, 1988).

Elmer Bowman became a community leader, was active in the improvement of the educational system in Pahrump, and worked with state and local leaders to modernize the valley. He was instrumental in initiating Mormon Church services, which in the early years were held in worshippers' homes. Later services were held in the congregation's own church, the first constructed in the valley. Much of the Bowmans' social life during the early years focused around church activities.

By the early 1950s, cotton growing was proving to be successful in Pahrump, and a small number of ranchers began to trickle in and take advantage of the valley's abundant land and water. Paul and Allen Simkins were among these settlers, entering the valley from Enterprise, Utah. Allen married Zula Carr, whom he met when she was working at Cactus Springs. Paul never married; following Allen's death, the ranch was converted into Allen Estates (M. Hafen, 1988a; Simkins, 1989).

The Brady brothers were also bachelors who arrived in the valley from California. They were known as frugal, hard-working farmers—among the best growers in the valley. Their property was sold to Cal-Vada and is now Cal-Vada Meadows (M. Hafen, 1988a). The Dollar

Ranch was developed by Ray Van Horn and went through a series of ownerships, but it never became a fully producing operation. The Basin Ranch was owned and operated by Bob and Jacque Ruud (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Commerce developed as the population grew. Dan Murphy established a bar just on the Nevada side of the state line toward Shoshone (Ford, 1988). Murphy's Bar was the second one in the valley; the first was located at the Pahrump Trading Post prior to its purchase by the Wards and the Pennells in the early 1950s. The Revert brothers from Beatty established a bulk gasoline and diesel distributorship in Pahrump to service the increased farming and pumping of water with diesel-powered engines. Business was good, and the Revert brothers also built a gas station on the present site of the Valley Bank. This was the second "gas station" in Pahrump; the first one was at the Pahrump Trading Post, where one gas pump was used by needy residents and travelers. About 1955 a brothel opened at Murphy's Bar, which was then owned by a man named Cruse who had been a bartender at the McCarran Airport in Las Vegas. The brothel only lasted about a month (Ford, 1988).

### Tim Hafen: Modern Pioneer in Cotton and Alfalfa

The 1950s and 1960s were decades of general prosperity for American agriculture. Farmers in southern Nevada and Utah and the Central Valley of California were looking for places to expand. Because of its isolation, the Pahrump Valley was one of the few areas in the west where large quantities of arable virgin land could still be found. Additionally, in the two decades prior to 1950, well-drilling technology had improved, making it easier to provide water for farming (M. Hafen, 1988a). Further, cotton was bringing good prices in the 1950s; and since Leon Hughes had demonstrated conclusively in 1948 that cotton could be grown profitably in the Pahrump Valley, cheap land and abundant water made it almost certain that farmers from other areas in southern Nevada and the Central Valley in California would move into the area. In 1951 Tim Hafen followed Elmer Bowman's pioneering footsteps into Pahrump.

Maxwell Kent Hafen, better known as "Tim," was born in St. George, Utah, in 1932, oldest of four sons of Maxwell and Estelle Hafen. The Maxwell Hafens had moved to Mesquite, Nevada, in 1930 and developed what became one of the larger farms in the area, consisting of 90 to 120 acres. Originally a cattleman, Maxwell Hafen started a dairy in the Virgin Valley, eventually milking 700 cows per day. Young Tim, however, decided that he did not care for the confining nature of the dairy business (M. Hafen, 1988a).

The family's first contact with the Pahrump Valley came about through the elder Hafen's responsibility as a charter member of the Las Vegas Office of the B.L.M.'s Grazing Advisory Board. A field tour through Goodsprings, the Sandy Valley, Pahrump, and north to the Reno highway first sparked the elder Hafen's interest in the agricultural possibilities there. Maxwell Hafen met with Elmer Bowman at the Manse Ranch. Bowman encouraged him to buy property in Pahrump because of the artesian water and cheap land (M. Hafen, 1988a). During Christmas vacation, while a student at Dixie Junior College, Tim accompanied his father to Pahrump to look at the area, and they ended up making arrangements to buy 840 acres from Elmer Bowman's family in 1950 (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Elmer Bowman was interested in building a community in Pahrump, and he knew that the only way roads, services, and the spartan social life in the community could ever be

improved was by bringing other settlers into the valley. For this reason, Bowman made Hafen and his father, who had formed a partnership, a deal that by modern standards would be difficult to refuse. Bowman sold the Hafens 840 acres for \$35 an acre on a 20-year note at 4 percent interest. Moreover, because the part of the old Kellogg Ranch that the Hafens had purchased was untested as far as artesian well production was concerned, Bowman agreed to put up two-fifths of the cost of drilling a well; the Hafens would contribute the remainder. The Hafens' share would be used as a down payment on the property. That first artesian well proved to be a big success, producing a 1080-gallons-per-minute flow. On July 2, 1951, at the age of 19, Tim Hafen and his wife became modern pioneers in the Pahrump Valley (M. Hafen, 1988a).

The first home for the Hafens was an old 25-foot trailer that had been towed from North Las Vegas. The trailer lacked plumbing, so water was carried in buckets from the well to the house, and an outdoor privy was constructed. Outside, a shower made of sheet iron and water heated by an old oil-burning water heater constituted the bathing facilities. Hafen recalls that between the house, which was not well heated, and the makeshift shower facility, "it was a little bit cold" in the winter (M. Hafen, 1988a). The Hafens lived in the trailer until 1954, at which time a more spacious 16x24-foot house was moved in from Boulder City. The house was originally built during the construction of Boulder Dam, but could not meet updated codes. Those first homes were followed by others, each bigger and better than the last. The old homes were never abandoned, but were utilized for the housing of farm workers employed on the ranch (M. Hafen, 1988a).

The first year, Hafen planted 40 acres of alfalfa and the next year he planted 100 acres of cotton and more alfalfa (M. Hafen, 1988a). Initially, Tim would transport his father's farming equipment from Mesquite to Pahrump, "farm like crazy" for two or three weeks, then return the equipment to his father. The 40 miles of rock road over the Johnnie Summit meant that Hafen could count on at least one blow-out on his rayon tires per trip (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Before new land could be brought under cultivation, it had to be cleared. Much of the ground that Hafen initially farmed had originally been planted in grains by Lois Kellogg, but after her death it had reverted to brush and huge tumbleweeds. These were cleared by pulling a 16-foot-long section of railroad rail across the ground. As the rail moved, it uprooted the weeds, which accumulated in a pile at the front of the rail. The pile was set on fire; if the tractor was driven at the proper speed, a continuous fire could be maintained as the rail was pulled across the ground (M. Hafen, 1988a). Since Elmer Bowman had several years' experience farming, he provided young Hafen with valuable assistance and advice in adjusting to the techniques that were necessary to produce success in Pahrump. Among many other things, he showed Hafen how to properly level his rows and also the proper techniques for use of siphon irrigation as opposed to the flood irrigation, which Hafen had been used to in Mesquite. Ditches followed the contour of the land, Hafen recalled, and "sometimes it would look like a snake going across the land, but when you filled that ditch with water it would level and the water would be level from one end to the other." In 1963, Hafen added the 650 acres from the Frehner Ranch to his holdings. Cotton was the most important crop grown on Hafen's ranch during this period, although alfalfa and some grains were also produced (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Over the years Hafen became an outstanding com-munity leader; he was deeply involved in efforts to improve the roads and to bring electricity and telephone service to the

valley. His leadership qualities inevitably led to politics. He was a grand jury foreman and a town board member, then was in Nevada's General Assembly for four terms, first as a representative from Nye, Esmeralda, and part of Mineral counties, later (1971) including all of Mineral County. He served on the Ways and Means Committee and as speaker pro tem when Paul Laxalt was Nevada's governor. Hafen left politics at the height of his career because he wanted to devote more of his time to farming. The district he represented took in three counties and he found that the distances he had to cover took too much of his time. For instance, to attend a luncheon in Hawthorne he had to travel 290 miles by car one way (M. Hafen, 1988a, b).

### Doby Doc Caudill: Colorful Individualist

Robert Doby Caudill (Doby Doc) probably came to Nevada from Texas. He claimed to have been present when General Black Jack Pershing chased Pancho Villa and his men into the hills in northern Mexico. Doby Doc also contended that he had been friendly with Texas John Slaughter, the renowned sheriff of Tombstone, Arizona, in the years after that town was made famous by Wyatt Earp and the battle at the O.K. Corral (Carlos, 1972:9D). He referred to Sheriff Slaughter as "Uncle John," a man who believed that the best way to bring law and order to Tombstone was to "shoot first and ask questions later" (Carlos, 1972:9D). Doc had spent many years in northern Nevada in the Elko area, where he ran clubs and engaged in the cattle business. He is reputed to have been one of the first four Nevadans to have enlisted in the armed services in World War I. He later regretted that, expressing the opinion that international bankers and big corporations in the U.S. and other countries "hornswaggled everybody into helping them make money" (Carlos, 1972:10D).

Doby Doc collected antiques and western memorabilia and stored them in a warehouse in northern Nevada. A lover of pianos and a player of ragtime music, he claimed to possess one hundred pianos (Ford, 1988). When Bill Moore constructed the Last Frontier and his Frontier Village (now the Frontier Hotel and Casino) on the Las Vegas Strip in 1942 and decided to decorate with a western motif, he drew heavily upon Doby Doc's collection (Moore, 1985). Doc transferred much of his collection to the Gold Strike Inn near Boulder Dam after purchasing that establishment in the 1960s.

Doby Doc was known as an individualist, and it was this trait that led him to Pahrump. During the late 1950s and the early 1960s, there was considerable fear among many Americans that the U.S. would be subject to atomic attack by the Soviet Union. The government encouraged citizens to construct fallout shelters for use in the event of an attack. Doby Doc took this advice seriously and decided to construct a bomb shelter on property he owned on the Strip just south of the Tropicana Hotel. Intent upon protecting himself from the Russians, he took his old bulldozer and started to dig a hole. The hole was getting deep when a man walked on the property and asked, "What are you doing?"

Doby Doc replied, "I'm building a bomb shelter."

The man then asked, "You got a permit?"

Doby Doc looked at him coldly and said, "I don't buy a permit from nobody."

This problem led to Doc's "solution": he purchased Pop Buol's old place and moved to Pahrump. There he constructed a very adequate bomb shelter on his property and he did so without a permit.

When he arrived in Pahrump, one of the first things he did was to introduce himself to Harry "Button" Ford, whose property bordered his on the west. Doby Doc drove into Ford's yard in his Rolls Royce, got out of his car, and introduced himself. Doc, a medium-sized man, was dressed as always in bib overalls and a white shirt with a big diamond stick pin. He wore another diamond on his finger, and Ford recalls that both must have been "almost as big as walnuts" (Ford, 1988). By that time Doc was close to 70, but his hair was still black. He was known for his diamond and gold collection; and he had a safe that is said to have come from the courthouse in Tonopah in which he kept a collection of silver coins so large it reportedly "would bring tears to your eyes" (Ford, 1988). In Las Vegas, thieves once tried to rob him and in the process nearly killed him, breaking his arm—but he never told them where his diamonds, gold, or a silver collection were located (Ford, 1988).

While Doby Doc was in Pahrump, his old friend Benny Binion, owner of the Horseshoe Club in Las Vegas, was sent to prison as a result of income tax problems. Because of Doby Doc's extensive knowledge of gambling and casino management, the Binion family brought him in to help run the Horseshoe Club. Doby Doc had to be constantly available at the club in order to participate in the money count. Often he had to drive into Vegas from Pahrump every eight hours for the count. His bedroom had no windows and thus could be made completely dark; regardless of the time of day, he could come home and go to sleep. Someone once asked him,

"Doby, why don't you hire somebody to take care of that money count?"

Doby replied, "Pretty soon he'll have as much money as me" (Ford, 1988).

The Binions purchased the old Buol place from Doby prior to his death. They used it to winter horses kept on their ranch in Montana during the summer. Harry Ford, whose front porch overlooked the Binion pasture, said it was beautiful to see over one hundred head of horses turned loose and running along the fences and to see a beautifully polished stagecoach pulled by four black horses practicing turns on the property. Many of the grapevines and fruit trees that Pop Buol planted years ago are still on the property and are still maintained, but they do not produce in the abundance they did when Buol owned them (Ford, 1988).

## Community Growth

In 1948 there were 8 ranches located in the Pahrump Valley. By 1965, there were 33 operations and a total of 7500 acres under cultivation, approximately one-third devoted to cotton. The remainder of the farm land at that time was primarily in wheat, alfalfa, and pasture. In 1968, approximately 10,062 acres were under cultivation (the high point of production), but by 1974 that figure had fallen to 6934 acres, primarily in alfalfa but some in cotton. By 1976, six years after the sale of the giant Pahrump Ranch to Preferred Equities, cotton production had dropped to 1062 acres (M. Hafen, 1976:6).

Dorothy Dorothy wrote that 20 people were receiving mail through the "no postmaster" post office in 1950 and only five years later 265 people were receiving mail, with another 200 "coming and going" (Dorothy, 1955). In 1975, the population of Pahrump was placed at 1476

(M. Hafen, 1976:6). Just over ten years later, the number had jumped to more than 7000, with most of the growth occurring in the 1980s.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Rise and Fall of Cotton

The period from the 1950s until about 1970 was described by Perry Bowman as "the golden agricultural period of Pahrump Valley" (Bowman, 1988). During this era, cotton became king.

Not all ground in the Pahrump farming area is suitable for growing cotton. Three large alluvial fans reach out from the Spring Mountains to the east and create the cotton-growing areas. The first large fan is at the north end of the valley; the second fan sets where the Pahrump Ranch is located; and the southern fan is at the site of the Manse and Hafen ranches. Cotton could effectively be grown on the best land on those fans. Attempting to grow cotton on poorer ground is somewhat futile, according to Perry Bowman. A farmer might try to get a good crop by adding more fertilizer to such land, which would increase his yield, but the higher yield would no more than pay for the added costs of the fertilizer (Bowman, 1988).

Bowman explained that over the years floods have washed alluvial fill down from the Spring Mountains. As the sediment-filled water moves out of the mountains and down toward the valley floor it loses its ability to carry eroded material. First the rock is deposited; then the gravel; still later the silt; and toward the center of the valley, the small clay particles suspended in the water are deposited last. Still farther out on the dry lake are minerals. The area between the clay and the gravel is the best agricultural ground in the Pahrump Valley. Typically, a large ranch in the valley might be suitable for cotton on only one-fourth or one-fifth of the total site (Bowman, 1988).

Temperature is another factor in growing cotton. Cotton plants are very susceptible to frosts (Wise, 1979:3J). If a farmer's property was large and distributed east to west down one of the fans, the temperature from the east side of the farm (which would be higher up on the fan) might vary by 4° both day and night, compared to the west side, or the lower part of the ranch. The west side will average 4° colder in the winter and will be 4° hotter in the summer. Every spring, cotton growers had to worry about their young cotton plants being nipped by frost (Bowman, 1988).

Cotton growing involves many subtleties. The proper amounts of water and fertilizer must be applied at just the right times. Fertilizer has to be applied so that it is heavy when the plant is putting on the cotton bolls, but must be running out as the bolls mature. If too much fertilizer is applied so that high nitrogen remains as the bolls are maturing, then the plant will put on too much foliage and the cotton bolls will be light and slow-growing (Bowman, 1988). Seeds came from California and had to be in the ground by April 15, or by the first of May at the latest; otherwise, there would not be enough time for the plants to mature. The ground into which the cotton seeds were placed could not be too wet or the seeds would rot (Bowman, 1988). Much of the technical know-how necessary to produce healthy cotton crops in the Pahrump Valley was learned through trial and error by valley farmers, often in cooperation and collaboration with state agricultural extension workers. "We started out little," Perry Bowman recalled. "I think that was the best thing. If we had started out big, we probably all would have

gone broke. You have to time it and watch it, then if you get something to work, you can go from there. If you don't jump too far" (Bowman, 1988).

Prior to the construction of the first gin in Nevada in 1959, picked cotton was baled and shipped to California. A bale of hay weighed 140 pounds, and cotton pressed into the same size would weigh over 190 to 200 pounds (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Truck transport of the cotton bales to California over dirt roads exiting the Pahrump Valley was not without its hazards. The road from Pahrump to Shoshone was narrow and graveled. Usually a big truck would have no problems as long as it stayed on the road. If, for any reason, a truck had to partially leave the road (for instance, meeting another vehicle coming from the opposite direction), the driver faced a good chance of getting stuck, particularly if the ground was wet from recent rain. The gooey clay often mired big trucks up to the axles, and a tractor or dozer would be needed to tow the truck out (Blosser, 1988). Because of trucking problems between Pahrump and Shoshone during this period, some valley residents are said to have used their political influence to get that particular road paved even before the road between Pahrump and Highway 95, over the Johnnie Summit, was paved, although funds had previously been allocated for the paving to Highway 95.

It is difficult for farmers to get financing in an area that is agriculturally unproven in the eyes of banks, such as the Pahrump Valley was in the 1950s and 1960s. This is especially true in Nevada, where bankers have generally lacked an understanding of farmers and their problems. One factor that enabled cotton growing to boom in Pahrump Valley during the 1950s and 1960s was the availability of financing through cotton gins. It is typical for owners of cotton gins to help provide financing to farmers in exchange for the opportunity to gin their cotton. The gin made its profit in three ways: The gin processed the farmer's cotton for a fee, and the farmer was free to sell his ginned cotton to the buyer of his choice—most sold to Calcot, Limited, in Bakersfield, California. The seed extracted from the raw cotton during ginning was purchased from the farmer by the gin and formed a second source of profit. The gin also made a profit on cotton planting seed it sold to the farmer (M. Hafen, 1988b; J. Hafen, 1989).

Two bales of cotton per acre is considered a high yield in California, with less than a bale common in states such as Mississippi; however, better than 2.5 bales of top-notch cotton per acre was possible in Pahrump (Raynor, 1959:264). In 1958, a total of 5488 bales of cotton were produced, an average of 1.96 bales per acre. At that time, Nevada had a cotton allotment acreage of 3220 acres, all but 81 of which were located in the Pahrump Valley (Raynor, 1959:263).

Cotton growers in Pahrump had a difficult year in 1965. Between 1959 and 1963, the valley produced an average of 6376 bales, but in 1965 production was about 2000 bales lower (M. Hafen et al., 1965:5). In 1965, cotton was damaged by wet weather throughout the growing season, which resulted in decreased length of fibre and decreased grade, based on whiteness and a poor micronaire reading, a measure of fibre maturity (M. Hafen et al., 1965:4-5). Pahrump had produced the highest quality upland cotton grown anywhere in the United States, for which growers had received a premium of \$10 to \$25 per bale (M. Hafen et al., 1965:5); the usual price received by valley farmers was about \$300 per bale. A decline in quality and decreased production in 1965 resulted in a loss of more than half a million dollars to Pahrump Valley farmers. Reduced income for the years 1963 to 1965 totaled more than \$950,000 (M. Hafen et al., 1965:6). In a report prepared by the Pahrump Growers Association in 1965,

growers discussed difficulties in obtaining financing for crops; and they noted prophetically that if the gin were forced to close, it would spell the end of cotton-growing in the Pahrump Valley (M. Hafen et al., 1965:6).

## Walt Williams and the Cotton Gin

Walter J. Williams was born in Comanche, Texas, in 1918. He grew up in Texas and lived in southern California during World War II; he worked in the defense industry because a medical condition kept him from serving in the military. Family business took him back to Texas before the war was over, and in 1947 he entered the cotton business in the Pecos area, which at that time was growing in agricultural importance, particularly in alfalfa and cotton production. Williams farmed two sections of cotton until 1957. In the mid-1950s, he began to be concerned about the future of the water supply. All agricultural water in the Pecos area was pumped from beneath the ground, and the water table was falling rapidly due to the large amount of agricultural development. By 1957, in the ten years that Williams had been there, the water level had dropped from 30 feet to 200 feet (Williams, 1988).

Although Williams and his family were well established in the Pecos area, with a successful cotton farm and a beautiful, recently constructed home, he began to look around for another opportunity. In 1957, he found it in a for-sale ad in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram that described a ranch consisting of 12,000 acres, 16,000 acres of leased grazing land in the hills to the east of the ranch, and a 1000-acre cotton allotment, located 60 miles west of Las Vegas. Williams knew that this cotton allotment was unusually large. One thousand acres at that time represented approximately 30 percent of the state of Nevada's allotment. In 1948, Nevada's cotton allotment had been 2522 acres; all but 100 were located in Pahrump (M. Hafen, 1976:2). Williams was well aware that cotton could not be grown on a free market in the United States. As with tobacco and peanuts, the federal government recognized that excessive production of these commodities would destroy the market for everyone, so restrictions were placed upon the amount of acreage a farmer could devote to these crops. Each farmer was allotted a certain acreage, based, for the most part, on his past productive record in that crop. The state of Nevada's eventual total allotment was about 3300 acres, which was minuscule when compared to those of many cotton-growing states. For one ranch to have 30 percent of a state's allotment was unheard of. Moreover, although the ranch had a 1000-acre allotment, not all of it was being utilized.

Wishing to investigate the ranch, and rationalizing that at the very least he would enjoy a trip to Las Vegas, Williams traveled to Nevada to inspect the ranch. It was the giant Pahrump Ranch. During his inspection, Williams took water and soil samples and upon returning to Pecos he had them analyzed. He found that the water was of excellent quality and the soil samples proved to be good. Williams decided to purchase the ranch; a silent partner, Frank Crews of Pecos, put up money for the purchase (Williams, 1988).

One might say that Williams had two motives for purchasing the ranch. First, it was an opportunity to grow cotton on a large scale in an area where cotton production was new but proven. Second, Williams saw great potential for the Pahrump Valley itself. Although the area was quite isolated and lacked services, he recognized that it held great potential for growth because of its abundance of land and water.

Williams purchased the Pahrump Ranch from C. B. Dickey Associates of Arvin, California. Dickey was a cotton man who owned considerable cotton-producing and processing resources in California and his operation in Pahrump had been more of a sideline. Under Dickey and Associates' ownership, Dickey's son-in-law, Kirk Meecham, had been foreman on the ranch. Williams agreed to purchase the Pahrump Ranch for \$400,000, at approximately \$30 per acre, on a four-year lease-purchase contract, to be concluded in 1962. Others growing cotton in the valley at the time of the purchase included Dale and Dorothy Dorothy at the Lazy 88; Tim Hafen; Bob and Jacque Ruud at the Basin Ranch; Ted and Marie Blosser; and the Bowman family on the Manse Ranch, among others.

When Williams took over the Pahrump Ranch, he found that it had been somewhat neglected. Irrigation ditches, in particular, were in bad shape. Erosion had produced deep gullies. The fields were badly infested with weeds. Williams had to rush to plant his first crop in 1957, but by 1959 he had his full 1000 acres in cotton. Thereafter he rotated cotton and alfalfa, with a three-year rotation for each crop. The first year he was in Pahrump, the Western Cotton Oil Company of Pecos, Texas (a subsidiary of Anderson-Clayton, the largest cotton merchant operation in the world), provided Williams with his financing. The second year, Williams received financing from Charlie Piercy of the Arizona Cottonseed Products Company (Williams, 1988).

Piercy was eager to work with Williams because he needed cotton acreage for a new cottonseed mill that he had constructed at Blythe, California. In 1959 Piercy's firm constructed, in Pahrump, the first and only cotton gin in Nevada. The Pahrump Ranch provided the first bale of cotton to go through the gin. It was a medium-sized gin containing four 80-saw stands and was a great asset to Pahrump Valley farmers. They no longer had to bale their cotton in the cumber-some haybalers and truck the bales to California for processing. Now they could pick the cotton with traditional pickers and transport the wagons down the road a few miles to the gin. After the processing, the seed was transported by truck to Blythe. The cotton was pressed into bales at the gin and sold to the buyer of the farmer's choice. Most farmers in the valley sold to a co-op in California (Williams, 1988). For many years, Jacque Ruud managed the cotton gin. In Pahrump, 1500 pounds of cotton from the field would produce approximately 500 pounds of lint, 800 pounds of cotton seed and about 200 pounds of trash and moisture (M. Hafen, 1988a). The presence of weeds in the field, an early frost, or a poor growing season could reduce the proportion of lint; an unusually good growing season would raise the ratio. Proportions are roughly the same for other growing areas (J. Hafen, 1989).

One of the first problems Williams faced in bringing the Pahrump Ranch into efficient operation was the availability of labor. Because of the isolation there was no ready pool of laborers upon which a cotton farmer could draw. Under Dickey's ownership, Mexican farm workers from California were used. Williams believed that use of these laborers was one reason for Dickey's lack of success. These workers, Williams contended, were not as industrious as those he was used to working with in Texas. There, under the Bracero Program, Mexican nationals were allowed to cross the U.S. border and work in the cotton fields for stipulated periods of time. Although Williams had no problem hiring these workers when he was in Pecos, he found a very different attitude toward the use of such labor prevailed in Nevada. He found himself doing constant battle with the Bureau of Employment Security in Carson City. He eventually was able to use Bracero workers regularly, as did many other cotton farmers in the

valley. "Mexicans," Williams recalled, "are willing, able and capable workers." Since Williams spoke some Spanish and was familiar with the procedures for hiring and working with Bracero workers, he made many trips to Brawley, California, in order to screen workers for himself and for other farmers in the valley (Williams, 1988). Additionally, Williams used his past connections in Texas to keep his ranch supplied with Mexican-American workers. The first year, he employed about 10 Mexicans with a foreman. Thereafter, he would utilize 20 to 30 hoers on his 1000 acres of cotton (Williams, 1988).

A large number of hoers were needed because of the abundance of Johnson grass in the fields. Johnson grass is particularly bad for cotton and must be killed by hoeing. Although herbicides were available at the time, they were expensive, required multiple applications, and had to be applied exactly to be successful. Another way of controlling Johnson grass was to plant a field in small grain for a couple of years; this would choke out much of the Johnson grass. Williams never used this method.

While Williams controlled the Pahrump Ranch, there were cuts in the Bracero Program and he lost a good portion of his labor force. Because he could not obtain the number of quality workers he needed, he turned to a different method of weeding, one that he had seen used in Texas. Williams bought several thousand goslings from a dealer in California and had them shipped to the ranch, where he kept them in a pen for a few days to get them acclimated to the area. Then he turned the thousands of geese loose on his cotton fields, where they attacked the Johnson grass and other weeds with great enthusiasm. Geese, it seems, live naturally off grasses and reject broadleaf plants such as cotton. After being turned loose in the fields, the geese were never again penned on the ranch until they were shipped after their weeding duties were completed. The geese did need a herdsman, however, to watch over them day and night in the fields and to protect them from predators such as coyotes. The herdsman always carried a gun and was willing to use it if anything threatened the feathered workers. Although Williams preferred human workers when he could obtain them, the geese proved to be a good substitute when quality laborers could not be found (Williams, 1988).

Cotton, Williams explained, is a thirteen-month crop—a year-round job. He, like most of the other cotton farmers in the valley, never had all the equipment that was needed, which made the job even more difficult. By the time the last gleanings were finished around Christmas, it was time to start preparing the land for the new crop. Most Pahrump farmers agree that the valley was never ideally suited for cotton. The location is a little too far north, and the season a little short at the end. The valley did produce an excellent quality upland cotton, but the average farmer could not get rich growing cotton in Pahrump. A bad crop year could mean disaster; with the bad crop in 1965, Williams ran \$200,000 in the hole. Expenses were enormous; the Pahrump Ranch alone used twelve 10,000-gallon loads of diesel a year (Williams, 1988).

Williams is credited with another Nevada agricultural "first." In 1967, not long after the process was developed, Williams began cubing alfalfa grown on his ranch. Baling hay, he recalled, is a cumbersome, dirty and slow process and scatters small and even large chunks of wire through the fields. With cubing, the alfalfa is cut and allowed to lie in rows until properly dried, at which time it is scooped up, sprayed with a fine mist, and pressed into cubes, which are then stored or shipped to market. Williams' cubes were trucked to Beaumont, California, to the Albers Milling Company, a subsidiary of the Carnation Company, where they were mixed

with other vitamin and food products and processed into racehorse feed. One can only guess at the number of racehorse champions nurtured on Pahrump hay; in effect, a bit of the Pahrump Valley circulated in their veins. Trucking the cubes to California led Williams into another business. He found that it was easier and less expensive if he did the trucking himself, and he soon found himself with a small fleet of large trucks (Williams, 1988).

Williams never resided on the Pahrump Ranch. While he owned the property, he maintained his home in Las Vegas. When he was not on ranch business, flying to Tonopah, Carson City, or several places in California, he commuted to the ranch, piling up an average of 50,000 miles a year. Williams found that the daily drive from Las Vegas to the Pahrump Valley provided him an opportunity to organize his thoughts and plan his activities (Williams, 1988).

When Williams took over the Pahrump Ranch, it consisted of approximately 12,000 acres. In 1960, he sold a section to Abe Fox, and in later years either gave or sold part of his holdings for a site for the cotton gin, a community center, a racetrack, and for a site for the high school (which was never utilized). In all, he farmed 2000 acres. Williams also raised Appaloosa horses, and by the time he sold out in 1970, he had 40 head and was showing them (Williams, 1988).

In 1970, Walt Williams sold the Pahrump Ranch to Preferred Equities for \$3,500,000 on a seven-year note. Preferred Equities took a year to survey the land and prepare it for subdivision, and Tim Hafen and Bob Ruud farmed some of the property in the interim.

Williams looked back with pride on his contribution to the development of Pahrump as a community. He was active, along with others, in bringing electric power and telephone service to the valley. He was instrumental in providing high quality Mexican laborers. Moreover, Williams takes credit for the Fall Harvest Festival; the first, held in 1959 on the Pahrump Ranch, featured a Mexican-style pit barbecue. For its first three years the celebration was held on the ranch; when the community center was completed, the community itself, spearheaded by Bob Ruud, took over the festival.

### Ted and Marie Blosser Take to Cotton

Ted Blosser was born in Santa Maria, California, in 1916. He was educated in the Exeter area of California and graduated from Pomona College. After serving in World War II, he grew cotton on leased land in the Ivanhoe area of California, but he wanted his own farm (Blosser, 1988). A friend had recently purchased some land in Fish Lake Valley and encouraged Blosser and his father, along with a friend, to take a look. They did so, but because it was extremely cold in Fish Lake Valley at that time, they drove on to Tonopah and spent the night at the Mizpah Hotel. The next morning at breakfast they were talking about growing cotton and a man named Harry Hughes, whom they did not know at the time, was sitting nearby and overhead them. "I hear you fellows talking about wanting to grow cotton in Nevada. I'm a licensed surveyor—I've done most of the work down in Pahrump Valley on the water wells. You ought to go down there and take a look at it," he said (Blosser, 1988, 1989).

They decided to take Hughes' advice and headed south that morning. Several hours and some hard miles later they were on the Johnnie Summit road, and they stopped at Burkett's Trading Post in Pahrump. The wind was blowing hard, Blosser recalled, and when Blosser's father opened the car door and stepped out, the wind blew his hat off. A small boy standing

nearby retrieved the hat and returned it to its owner. "Fellow, does the wind always blow this way?" the elder Blosser asked the helpful lad.

"No sir," he replied with a twinkle in his eye, "sometimes it blows the other way."

That was in 1952 and was Ted Blosser's first contact with the Pahrump Valley. The lad was a son of Leon Hughes.

In the store, the Blossers inquired about cotton farming in Pahrump; they were advised to talk to Tim Hafen, who had been in the valley about a year. They drove to Hafen's ranch and found him in a field on a tractor. A conversation with Hafen was enough to convince Ted to make the move. By that time, a small land boom in Pahrump had begun and speculators had purchased considerable amounts of available land. Blosser and his father bought 160 acres from a southern Californian and later purchased additional acres from the Shirtliff brothers, who had obtained their land through the Desert Land Act (Desert Entry). The Blossers paid \$75 an acre for the first parcel and \$50 an acre for the second. Blosser purchased more land later (Blosser, 1988, 1989). When Blosser entered the cotton business in Pahrump, the price of cotton was 35 to 45 cents a pound, supported by the federal government. Farmers of the valley constantly experimented with new varieties, trying different seeds on 30-acre blocks.

When Ted and Marie Blosser and their children moved to the valley they recognized that communication problems (dirt roads and lack of phone service) would be almost insurmountable, but they were determined to make life as comfortable as possible. Diesel fuel was 7 cents a gallon by the truckload, and all irrigation water was pumped by diesel engines. Blosser installed a 10,000-gallon diesel storage tank, purchased a 50-kw generator, hooked the generator to the tank, and ran it day and night. The Blossers started with a small home in 1952, and by 1958 they had constructed a lovely, all-electric home on the farm (Blosser, 1988).

Like all farmers in the valley, except the very largest, Blosser did most of his own mechanical work, repairing engines and keeping equipment running. And like many cotton farmers in the valley, especially those who were forced to service debt on their farms, the Blossers found it necessary to supplement their income through outside employment. Marie worked for many years as a school teacher in Pahrump, and Ted worked as a mechanic on the Nevada Test Site. Blosser recalled, "What it boiled down to is, I subsidized this farm to the tune of \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year working at the test site and Marie put food on the table." Blosser, like so many farmers in the Amargosa and Pahrump valleys, had many stories to tell regarding difficulties in obtaining crop financing, ranging from the refusal of local Nevada bankers to work with area farmers to difficulties with federal bureaucrats in charge of financing and land programs (Blosser, 1988).

### Bob and Jacque Ruud: The Pioneering Spirit

When Bob and Jacque Ruud moved to the Pahrump Valley from Madera, California, in 1958, raw ground in Madera similar to that in Pahrump was selling for \$1,500 an acre. The Ruuds wanted to expand their vineyard and alfalfa seed operation in Madera, and they were aware of friends who had obtained 320 acres of land in Pahrump under the Desert Land Act for 25 cents an acre. The Ruuds checked out Pahrump; liking it, they applied for and obtained 320 acres under the Desert Land Act. With friends as partners they also purchased 800 acres at a reasonable price, 200 of which was sand dunes and 50 in cotton. They loaded part of the

furnishings from a six-room house into a 48x8-foot mobile home and moved to Pahrump, taking three days to make the trip. They started farming immediately. From a community where telephones, television, school buses, paved roads, corner grocery stores, and one-hour equipment parts replacement were the norm, the Ruuds found themselves in an area with no electricity and no television, where the nearest "corner grocery store" was several miles away, the school buses were makeshift affairs, and if one cared to drive to Lancaster, California, to replace a broken piece of farm equipment the venture took a minimum of one day. The nearest telephone was 28 miles away over dirt roads. Jacque describes the roads as "meandering gravel roads that went around sand dunes and gullies." Moreover, the quiet in the valley was "stunning" (Ruud, 1988, 1989).

Jacque recalled, "I decided it would take an adventure-some pioneering spirit to live in Nevada, but we both had that, so the only way to go was forward for ourselves as well as for our family and new community." In 1958 Pahrump consisted of about 250 people, a large number of whom were members of the Church of Latter-Day Saints. Although not of that faith, the Ruuds found all residents in the valley helpful and friendly, and they were made to feel more than welcome (Ruud, 1988). The Ruuds became active in community affairs and Bob filled many leadership positions, including three terms as Nye County commissioner from the Pahrump District. He was an effective commissioner—popular and respected throughout the county. Jacque recalls that Bob was most proud of his success in promoting unity and good will among the districts in Nye County. Bob Ruud died unexpectedly in 1982 and Jacque was appointed to serve his unexpired term (Ruud, 1988).

### King Cotton Deposed

Two factors spelled the end to cotton-growing in the Pahrump Valley. The first, though not necessarily the most important, was the price of cotton. In 1960, valley farmers were receiving 60 cents a pound for their cotton. In 1988, even though prices of virtually everything had tripled and quadrupled since the 1960s, the cotton price, due largely to a worldwide oversupply, was still in the 60-cent range. It was impossible for Pahrump Valley farmers to grow cotton for 60 cents a pound and survive (M. Hafen, 1988a). The second factor was the loss of the Pahrump Ranch's cotton-growing contribution, due to the sale of the ranch to Preferred Equities. The 1000 acres of cotton that the ranch produced were essential in making Pahrump's cotton gin economically viable. Although cotton was grown on the Pahrump Ranch for a period after its sale to Preferred Equities, the eventual withdrawal of that production capacity meant that other cotton growers in the valley had to pay proportionally more to the gin in order to keep it in Pahrump.

Gradually, more and more farmers withdrew from growing cotton after the sale of Pahrump Ranch; they realized that the handwriting was on the wall for the industry. The withdrawal of each farmer from cotton-growing made the gin that much more uneconomical, until all cotton production in the Pahrump Valley ceased in 1983 (M. Hafen, 1988a). The valley cotton production had fallen by 60 percent by 1980. By 1980, in addition to the loss of the Pahrump Ranch, the Dorothy Dorothy and the Brady brothers' ranches had gone out of production (they were also sold to Cal-Vada), and the Simkins had stopped raising cotton. Thus, the end of cotton production in the valley was more or less inevitable (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Most farmers who stayed in business returned to alfalfa production. But alfalfa production was somewhat marginal. It cost a farmer in the Pahrump Valley approximately \$125 an acre to irrigate alfalfa compared to \$25 per acre for farmers in the Needles, Blythe, and Imperial valleys, which use Colorado River water. Although valley water costs are not that different from costs in the Central Valley Canal region and the Lancaster-Antelope Valley area in California, the distance from market is a disadvantage for Pahrump growers. In the late 1980s there was also an oversupply of alfalfa; the price of alfalfa bottomed out at \$80 per ton in the summer of 1987 (M. Hafen, 1988a).

Given the heavy demands irrigation was placing on water resources, the valley was beginning to show signs of developing water-shortage problems. Heavy pumping of ground water during the decades after 1950, the heydays of the valley's agricultural period, led to unsustainable demands on the valley's water resources. In 1970, "appropriations had been certified to use 45,607 acre-feet per year, and permits had been granted to develop another 45,416 acre-feet per year" (M. Hafen, 1976:5). The total potential legal demand of more than 91,000 acre-feet per year was about four times the annual recharge rate for the Pahrump Valley aquifer. In 1970, the state engineer ordered that no more ground water permits for irrigation be granted in the Pahrump Artesian Basin (M. Hafen, 1976:5).

## CHAPTER 6

### Modern Trends

In the early 1950s an IRS agent was auditing the books for a saloon keeper in Beatty, and he was asked if he knew of someone who could hold community religious services once a month. Reverend Walter Bishop of the First Baptist Church in Las Vegas responded to the call and drove the 120 miles one way to Beatty each month to conduct services. Out of Reverend Bishop's efforts the Nevada Larger Parish developed, and Vacation Bible Schools were conducted in a dozen different communities surrounding Las Vegas. Interns for this program were recruited from around the United States (Gritzner, 1986).

#### Lee Gritzner: Pastor and Teacher

One intern was Lee Gritzner. He had taught school in Osage, Iowa, for twenty years and eventually made the Pahrump-Tecopa area his home. He ended up teaching in Tecopa and Shoshone for twenty years, and he became the founding pastor of the first church in the area in modern times: the Safe Community Church in Tecopa, which was constructed in 1957 (Gritzner, 1986). Drawing upon his Biblical knowledge, Gritzner related the circumstances he found in Pahrump to those Moses had encountered on the desert:

*Calculation shows that Moses was some 100-120 miles from home, an area referred to as "the backside of the desert." In the early days of Pahrump, we could surely relate since Las Vegas was the only town within 100 miles, and we didn't have the fine hard-surfaced roads on which to travel. I once heard a minister comment that he felt we were even farther back in the desert than Moses (Gritzner, 1986:5).*

Gritzner described Pahrump:

*Pahrump of the 1950s consisted of a trading post, complete with cafe and post office. In addition, there were two old green barracks, one of the former school house, and the other the "teacherage." Nearby was a new three-room school. Down on the corner, where the bank is now located, was a filling station and a small cafe. Electrical power was totally unknown, unless you were fortunate enough to have your own generator (Gritzner, 1986:3).*

#### Education in Pahrump

Prior to 1900 and in the first decades of the twentieth century, it was necessary for Pahrump ranchers to send their children to live in other communities for their education. Parents could instruct small children in many of the basics, but as the children got older, they were sent away to school, usually to live with family. The Harsha Whites, for instance, sent their children to San Bernardino.

Ed Fleming, who had grown up in the iron ore district of northern Minnesota, obtained his first school teaching position in Pahrump in 1938. The valley had its own school district, known as the Rose School District, which was separate from the Nye County school system. Classes were held in a small building constructed of railroad ties located on Pop Buol's property (Fleming, 1988).

When Stanley Ford moved to Pahrump in 1944, his children attended school in the one-room schoolhouse. The addition of Harry "Button" Ford and his sister to the classroom filled it to overflowing. "My sister and I had to sit together and our desk was almost out the door," Harry Ford remembered (Ford, 1988). The school was located about one-half mile west of the junction of Highways 160 and 372—near the location of the A & A Market (1990). It was an old tie structure with a dirt roof (Ford, 1988). "Old Pop Buol put dirt roofs on a lot of the buildings," Ford recalled. The school went from the first to the eighth grade and there were at least fifteen students. There was no high school so older students had to leave the valley to attend schools in other locations, such as Death Valley Junction, Shoshone, Las Vegas, and Needles, California (Ford, 1988).

A teacher at the Pahrump School in the 1930s and early 1940s was paid about \$125 a month and room and board. Sometimes ranches provided part of a bunkhouse or structure for the teacher to live in. For two years in the late 1930s Ed Fleming rented a small house that a Mrs. Miller had constructed as a "honeymoon" cottage (Fleming, 1988). Ford remembered that once, in the 1940s, toward the end of the school year the school did not have enough money to pay the teacher. A bingo party was held at the old hotel on the Pahrump Ranch and women brought pies and cakes. The community raised enough money to pay the teacher's salary for the remainder of the year (Ford, 1988).

From the schoolhouse on the Buol property, in the fall of 1944 classes were relocated to the red schoolhouse, which had been moved during the summer from Clay Camp in Ash Meadows to a site on the Pahrump Ranch on Highway 372, just west of the junction with Highway 160. School was held there for eight years until a barracks building was moved in from Boulder City to the site of the present grade school on Wilson Street; three additional classrooms were constructed in the late 1950s (Ford, 1988, 1989). In about 1958 the Rose School District was incorporated into the Nye County School District (Ford, 1988). The red schoolhouse has been restored by Preferred Equities and moved to a nearby site on the company's property in Pahrump. In 1973, a portion of the money obtained by Nye County District Attorney William P. Beko's successful property tax lawsuit against the contractors on the Nevada Test Site was used to construct (and totally fund) a new high school in Pahrump (Neighbors, 1988). Pahrump's steady growth led to a burgeoning school population, numbering over 1000 students in 1988. Because of the increase in population, Pahrump High School moved from the "A" to the "AA" athletic classification in southern Nevada in 1987.

### The Pahrump Trading Post

Originally Charles Bennett ran a store on the Pahrump Ranch. Not long after the turn of the century, Pop Buol moved to the valley, and he operated a store on his property for many years. (Buol's store was located approximately one-half mile west of the present junction of

Highways 160 and 372.) At one time, he had the contract to haul the mail once a week from the Tonopah highway, and his store also functioned as the post office.

Sometime prior to 1948, Pawford and Johnnie Brooks constructed a large building near the old Buol place that served a number of purposes. The building's primary function was to house a mercantile operation known as the Pahrump Trading Post, but it also served as a saloon, as living quarters for the Brooks, and as a post office. One gas pump also stood in front of the Trading Post. In 1947, the Brooks sold the operation to Vernon Ward and Guy Pinnell; Ward's parents, Tom and Fannie, joined in the partnership a short time later. The Wards were not drinkers, and they closed the bar section of the establishment. After he moved to Pahrump, Stanley Ford had the contract to haul mail on the Star Route. Each Wednesday he met the mail bus at the Tonopah highway, gave the new mail to the bus driver, and picked up incoming items.

Mrs. Brooks had been the postmaster. When she decided to leave the valley, she asked "Dutch" Turner, who was then living in Las Vegas with her husband, Bill, if she would like to move to Pahrump and become the new postmaster. The Turners, who had visited the valley off and on for years, agreed and moved to Pahrump (B. and D. Turner, 1988). Dutch was appointed postal clerk and Bill went to work on the Pahrump Ranch ("A Testimonial...", 1976). Mrs. Brooks gave Dutch a three-hour course in how to run the post office; Dutch also helped out in the store. Dutch and Bill made plans to homestead in Pahrump, but when they found they were expecting another child, Dutch resigned her job as postmaster and they moved back to Las Vegas in 1950. Later they returned to the valley to live on their homestead. In 1956 the postmaster, Marie Spencer, resigned, and Dutch was again appointed to the position. By then the Pahrump Trading Post had been sold to Frank and Katie Burkett and mail boxes had been installed. Later the post office was moved to an addition to the Cotton Pickin' Saloon in the 1960s and then to a location at the intersection of Commercial Street and Loop Road.

Dutch Turner recalled many interesting times in her years as postmaster, including one instance when she checked a mail sack to make sure it was empty before placing mail in it and found a garter snake, which slithered up her arm. She also takes credit for initiating "slow mail service" for the U.S. Post Office; she once sent a week's packages out with no stamps. The Las Vegas Post Office helpfully returned them the following week with a notice stating they couldn't send them out without stamps ("A Testimonial...", 1976).

When Turner took over duties as postmaster in March 1948, there were 78 people in the valley (B. and D. Turner, 1988). In theory, anything anybody wanted was available through the Pahrump Store. All a person had to do was tell the proprietor, and it would be obtained on the next trip to town (B. and D. Turner, 1988).

## Pahrump Newspapers

Pahrump did not develop regular newspaper services until after Preferred Equities came into the valley and began subdivision of the giant Pahrump Ranch. Newspapers are a prime source of data for reconstructing the history of a community. Because Pahrump had no newspaper service through-out most of its existence, the early history of the Pahrump Valley is much less fully recorded than the history of numerous communities in the Death Valley and southern Nevada areas that did have newspapers. Hence, what is known about Pahrump's early

days resides within the memories of people, in tidbits scattered in newspapers from other communities, and in letters and documents available from other various sources. No doubt future researchers will scour libraries, archives, and family collections for such sources.

The Pahrump Valley Times began publication on December 23, 1971. It was an occasional sheet promoting land sales activity in southern Nye County. Under editor Milt Bozanic, the Times became a weekly newspaper on September 17, 1976. Kathy Ledford Hall established a second occasional sheet on May 5, 1972, known as the Pahrump Valley Star; it became a weekly July 31, 1975. The Times and Star were later merged. A quarterly, Desert Living, began publication in the summer of 1979 under the stewardship of Fred S. Cook. The Pahrump Tribune, a twice-monthly paper, began publication October 17, 1979, with Ken Bouton as editor and Denny Lynch as general manager (Lingenfelter and Gash, 1984:161-162). In May 1975, local printer Chuck Gallivan began a weekly publication entitled What's on Pahrump Valley Television and Local Events. The publication ran for over a year, and in addition to providing the TV schedule for the week, it listed local events and was filled with both recent and historical photos (Galvin, 1989).

### Pahrump Becomes an Unincorporated Town

In 1962, the Nye County commissioners, after holding a public meeting in Pahrump on petitions urging that Pahrump be granted unincorporated town status, granted the community's request. After they designated Pahrump as an unincorporated town, the county commissioners appointed a Pahrump Town Advisory Board, a justice of the peace, and a constable ("Commissioners to Form...", 1962).

### Four Additional Steps to Modernization

Cotton-growing brought people and a degree of prosperity to the Pahrump Valley. Although the population increase brought by cotton production was not great compared to a large city, still it formed the foundation upon which future growth could take place. This expansion gave impetus to the implementation of four modern services without which further growth would have been impossible. These services were paved roads, airstrips, electric power, and telephones. These developments all took place within a ten-year period from the middle 1950s to the middle 1960s. They had the effect of fulfilling the promise that local writer Dorothy Dorothy had made a few years earlier in her newspaper column "Pumpings from Pahrump":

*All this valley needs is a chance to progress. Take off the shackles, the hobbles, the stranglehold and give it the freedom through paved roads, and electricity, and watch a bonanza of the west such as you thought only a gold rush could create. This vein WILL NEVER RUN OUT! (Dorothy, n.d.).*

### Pahrump Gets Paved Roads

Pahrump Valley residents had long dreamed of a paved road linking their community with Las Vegas. An article in the Las Vegas Review Journal in 1947 indicated that Pahrump Valley development was being stymied by a lack of suitable highways ("Productive Pahrump Valley...," 1947). There were dirt roads in the valley that would take a traveler from Pahrump to the next town, but they were never well maintained and were dusty, slow, and given to destroying tires. The most frequently used route to Las Vegas for valley residents was north over the Johnnie Summit for 26 miles to Highway 95 and then on pavement for about 68 miles into Las Vegas. This was more than a two-hour trip one way, even in the days when there was no speed limit on Highway 95. Another dirt road led south down the Pahrump Valley. One could turn east at Trout Canyon and, in theory, reach Las Vegas on an extremely rough and difficult route that descended into the Las Vegas Valley through Red Rock Canyon. This road was almost never used by valley residents due to its poor condition and frequent washouts. One could also continue south from the Trout Canyon cut-off through Sandy Valley to Goodsprings, then to Jean, where one could connect with the Las Vegas-Los Angeles highway. Although preferred by Roland Wiley from his Hidden Hills Ranch, it was extremely long and dusty and it might take more than 3-1/2 hours from the Pahrump Ranch.

In the early 1950s a dirt road was completed over the Spring Mountains at Mountain Springs, along the route of the Old Mormon Trail. It was a rough road but was used by some residents, including Bill Turner, who commuted daily to Las Vegas over the route for several years. It was tough on both driver and vehicle, and Turner found himself broken down and hoofing it for help on more than one occasion (B. and D. Turner, 1988). There had been an effort to construct a road over the Spring Mountains from the Las Vegas Valley using Conservation Corps labor during the 1930s, but the route does not seem to have been successfully completed. Dirt roads also linked Pahrump with Shoshone and Tecopa, California.

The first section of paved road in the Pahrump Valley was constructed in 1953, linking the Clark County-Nye County line just north of the Manse Ranch with the north end of the valley. Long-term residents remembered how odd it was to be driving along a dirt road, say coming from the south, only to hit a nice stretch of pavement at the Nye County Line, roll along the pavement and then, within a few miles, suddenly be back on a dusty, dirt road (Ford, 1988).

In 1954 Highway 160, linking Pahrump with Las Vegas over the Spring Mountains at Mountain Springs, was completed. Nevada Senator Pat McCarran had announced in early May 1951 that funds would be available for the construction of the new highway ("New Highway Assured by Senator," 1951). The route was officially opened on Sunday, September 26, 1954. The official program for the celebration hailed, "Pahrump Wedded to Civilization" ("Official Program: Pahrump Wedded to Civilization," 1954). In attendance at the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Clark-Nye County boundary were U.S. Senator Pat McCarran, Governor Charles Russell, and other distinguished guests including Dorothy Dorothy, who served as Mistress of Ceremonies. A mock wedding ceremony was held in which Pahrump was "wedded to civilization"; former Governor Vail Pittman served as Minister. The ceremony followed a script that Dorothy Dorothy had written, and the proceedings were filmed for television by the Desert News Bureau, the predecessor of the present Las Vegas News Bureau. Band music was provided by the Las Vegas High School, which recently had won the Cashman Sweepstakes Trophy at the 1954 Helldorado in Las Vegas. The official brochure featured many pictures of old-time Pahrump. Fifty carloads of Clark County residents attended the festivities in Pahrump,

and a stand dispensing hot dogs and soft drinks was set up at the site of the celebration. The road, in addition to making it easier for Pahrump residents to reach Las Vegas, was also hailed as a time-saving cutoff to communities linking Las Vegas and California. Four hours of travel time between San Francisco and Las Vegas, as well as the San Joaquin Valley and Las Vegas, were deleted once the California sections of contemplated highways were completed ("Pahrump Celebration Set Sunday," n.d.; "Official Program: Pahrump Wedded to Civilization," 1954).

The road connecting Pahrump with Highway 95 to the north over the Johnnie Summit was not paved until 1966. Paving of the road to Shoshone was started in 1955 and completed in 1956 (Ford, 1988), and the paved road to Tecopa was completed a little later. Originally, most people favored paving the northern link with Highway 95 first, rather than creating the route over Mountain Springs (Ford, 1988). This may have been because many residents were familiar with that route to Las Vegas, despite the fact that it was longer than the route over Mountain Springs. One version is that Dorothy Dorothy, who was a strong worker in the Democratic Party (the state was then controlled by the Democrats), was largely responsible for the Mountain Springs route being constructed first.

There are both pros and cons regarding which section of the highway should have been constructed first. A shorter route to the Las Vegas metropolitan area was a definite asset as far as Pahrump growth was concerned; more importantly, it gave valley people easier accessibility to the goods and services in Las Vegas. On the other hand, pavement of the Johnnie Summit section of the road made Pahrump more accessible to workers at the Nevada Test Site (Ford, 1988).

President Harry Truman established the Nevada Test Site on December 18, 1950, and six weeks later, on January 27, 1951, the first atomic weapon was tested over Frenchman's Flat (Titus, 1986:55-56). Although sporadic at first, activities at the Test Site had a dramatic effect on employment in southern Nevada. In 1986, for example, about 9 percent of the work force in southern Nevada was directly or indirectly dependent upon activities at the facility, whose labor force included 240 federal employees, 7100 private contractors, and 11,300 support jobs, for a total employment of 18,640. In 1985 the Department of Energy's payroll in southern Nevada amounted to \$301 million (Titus, 1986:68).

It is only about 40 miles from the gate at Mercury to Pahrump, at least 20 miles closer than Las Vegas is to Mercury. The 26 miles of dirt road over the Johnnie Summit had effectively discouraged all but the most intrepid Test Site workers from settling in Pahrump during the early years of nuclear testing. Few chose to drive 52 miles over tire-busting dirt roads every day; instead, most made the hazardous trip back and forth to Las Vegas over what became known as the Widow Maker highway because of the large number of accidents and fatalities on the road. Bill Mankins, who, with his wife, Pat, immigrated into the valley in the early 1950s, was one of the few who moved into Pahrump and chose to make the trip daily. A few others, including Ted Blosser, made the commute. Workers who did not want to travel to Las Vegas every day chose to stay at Indian Springs (Ford, 1988).

In 1966 the road from Pahrump over the Johnnie Summit (in 1989 Highway 160) to Highway 95 was paved; there was now a long paved loop from Las Vegas over Mountain Springs, north to Pahrump, over the Johnnie Summit to Highway 95, and then south again to Las Vegas. Former State Assemblyman Bob Revert, a resident of Beatty, was instrumental in

obtaining authorization for paving the route, and he looks back with pride on his role in helping to link Pahrump with Las Vegas (Revert, 1988). The paving of the Johnnie road led to a steady stream of Test Site workers who moved to Pahrump. Some moved there because they liked open spaces, fresh air, and freedom from the hustle and bustle of the increasingly large city of Las Vegas. Since Pahrump was located in Nye County, which had no building codes or building restrictions, many were attracted to Pahrump because they were free to construct the type of home they wanted or could afford. In Pahrump, a Test Site worker was free to set up a small mobile home, drill his well, install a septic tank, and have a horse corral, all free from the harassment of building inspectors and city bureaucrats. Often, a family would move to Pahrump and live in humble circumstances for a time. But by saving their money and working hard they could gradually improve their circumstances until finally they had a nice home of their own on their own acreage, something of which both they and the community could be proud. In contrast, someone who had located in Las Vegas might have accumulated a large stack of rent receipts and little else. These freedoms are still enjoyed by Pahrump residents.

Data is not available on the Nevada Test Site's economic effect on the Pahrump Valley, but it is known to be considerable. Newspaper accounts indicated that the labor strike on the Test Site in the fall of 1987 cost Nye County \$1 million a month (Ford, 1989).

Harry "Button" Ford, who grew up in the Pahrump Valley and began working for the Nye County Road Department in Pahrump at the age of 18, was a good source of information about all valley roads. Ford constructed or supervised the construction of virtually every mile of road in Pahrump. When he started with the department in 1955, his area included the Pahrump Valley and all of Nye County north to Scotty's Junction located north of Beatty on the Sarcobatus Flats on Highway 95. As Pahrump grew, Ford's territory became smaller and was eventually restricted to the Pahrump Valley (Ford, 1988).

Ford estimated that there are 120 to 130 miles of paved county roads within the valley. Much of this roadway was paved during the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time asphalt was cheap, being a by-product of jet fuel and gasoline production, and 5 to 6 miles of road per year could be installed. Costs then were much lower; a 25-ton load of asphalt could be delivered from Bakersfield, California, for \$600, including two hours of free spreading time. In 1988, asphalt cost \$200 a ton at the railroad siding in Las Vegas and included no spreading time (Ford, 1988).

## Airstrips in the Pahrump Valley

Dale and Dorothy Dorothy had a landing strip, a runway "of sorts," at their residence when Walt Williams came to the Pahrump Valley. There was another small runway on the Pahrump Ranch itself, which Williams remembers as a "real thriller." Williams constructed another runway near the cotton gin, and more recently, an airstrip has been constructed at the north end of the valley not far from the old Dorothy Dorothy airstrip (Williams, 1988). Roland Wiley also built an airstrip at his Hidden Hills Ranch (Wiley, 1988).

## Electric Power Comes to the Pahrump Valley

In the days before electric power arrived on powerlines, Pahrump Valley residents used small generators for household needs. This was an awkward arrangement because the generators were expensive, needed to be serviced regularly, and were subject to mechanical breakdowns. In addition, it was inconvenient to start and stop the engines in the evening or when power was needed, unless one ran the generator all day, in which case the expense was even greater. In most cases the generators were small and care had to be exercised concerning the load that was put on the supply at any one time. Harry Ford recalled:

*We had propane lights, but my father always had a gasoline-powered car generator with a little Briggs and Stratton or Maytag gasoline engine and a couple of car batteries. He'd go out at night and pour in a cup of gasoline, and when the engine died, we went to bed (Ford, 1988).*

When Harry Ford got married in 1958, he and his bride had a small propane-fired generator that was adequate for the house if one did not run too many things at a time (Ford, 1988). In the summer, Ford remembered, "it would run the electric washing machine and a swamp cooler, but not both at the same time" (Ford, 1988).

The lack of a public electric power system in the Pahrump Valley was probably the second biggest impediment to growth and development. Ford recalled a prophecy that a Pentecostal preacher friend of the family once made. The preacher was given to visions, and in about 1959 he told Ford of a vision in which he saw "things...sticking up" on the west side of the valley but couldn't tell what they were (Ford, 1988). The preacher did say that whatever it was, it would mean money for the people of Pahrump Valley. Ford thought he might be envisioning oil derricks.

Several years later, Ford was sitting on the front porch of his father's house, looking out on the valley to the west. Ford said to his father, "Dad, remember what that preacher said about things that were going to be sticking up?" Stanley Ford looked out to the west side of the valley and saw the power poles sticking up and a big grin spread on his face. Ford said, "Dad, did that raise the value of the land in the valley?"

His father's reply was, "Yes. It sure did, son" (Ford, 1988).

Bringing power to the Pahrump Valley was not easy; it took a struggle. Valley farmers began talking about the problems in the early 1950s (M. Hafen, 1988a). They attended meetings and incorporated a small utility company known as the Pahrump Valley Utility Company, which charged a \$10 membership fee in order to raise seed money to get things moving. Elmer Bowman of the Manse Ranch, Walt Williams of the Pahrump Ranch, Tim Hafen, and Ted Blosser were prime movers in this endeavor. In the middle and late 1950s, leaders held meetings with the Nevada Power Company in Las Vegas, attempting to induce the large utility to build lines into Pahrump. These efforts were futile. Directors of Nevada Power were, in effect, only humoring the Pahrump ranchers (M. Hafen, 1988a). Ted Blosser recalled a meeting with the company president, Reed Gardner, attended by Tim Hafen, Bob Ruud, Elmer Bowman, Walt Williams, and himself. Bowman did all the talking and when he was finished, Gardner said, "I'll tell you, we can't really go out there and put in a system for you. If we did, we'd have to raise our rates here in Vegas to pay for it. If it wasn't that we're neighbors, I wouldn't have agreed to this meeting."

Elmer Bowman turned to the members of his group and said, "Well, fellows, if that's the way they feel about it, we might as well go," and they all got up and left (Sternberg, 1986:5).

Pahrump, as far as the utility was concerned, was un-proven and did not represent a potential profit. The company did agree to sell power to the ranchers as far as Blue Diamond, but they would have to construct their own lines from Blue Diamond on the east side of the Spring Mountains over the range to the Pahrump Valley. Moreover, Nevada Power wanted to charge 6 to 8 mills per kilowatt-hour, which, when costs of transmission to Pahrump were added in, would have represented astronomical costs for the people of the valley, far beyond anything they could possibly pay. And the Nevada Power Company knew it.

Meanwhile, ranchers in the Amargosa Valley were working along the same lines to bring power to their valley. H. H. (Hank) Records had moved to the Amargosa Valley in 1953, taking over the old Tonopah and Tidewater Ranch. He and his brother, Robert Records, along with Ed Mankinen, Ralph Dalton, and Gene Eastabrooks, had formed the Amargosa Valley Electric Cooperative (Records, 1987). Like their neighbors in the Pahrump Valley, they had attempted to interest the Nevada Power Company in extending service to their valley and they, too, had been rebuffed.

Hank Records had lined up engineers in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to conduct a feasibility study on bringing power into the Amargosa and Pahrump valleys, and had touched a number of political bases as well. He knew a Mr. Johnson who was high up in the power structure of the Nevada Test Site; he had contacted Johnson, suggesting that the Test Site could use a backup power source. At that time, the Nevada Power Company supplied power to the Nevada Test Site, but outages sometimes occurred. If an alternative power source were available, Test Site activities would not be subject to disruption when the Nevada Power Company source was broken, Records argued (Records, 1987). Johnson agreed, and he ordered his people to work with the Amargosa Valley Electric Co-Op (Records, 1987).

The support of the Atomic Energy Commission (the predecessor to U.S. Department of Energy) provided the extra clout needed for the residents of the two valleys. Contact with the Rural Electrification Administration had indicated that if the Amargosa Valley Electric Cooperative and the Pahrump Valley Utility would agree to merge, the REA would provide a loan for construction of a power distribution system in the two valleys. The valley utility companies merged on March 2, 1963, and three days later the REA approved a loan for \$3.9 million (Sternberg, 1986:5).

Guarantee of a loan from the REA was not the end of the farmers' problems, however. The Nevada Power Company did not take kindly to what it viewed as outside interference in the local electric power distribution game. Recognizing that it was about to be outdone by newcomers, the Nevada Power Company began constructing "spite lines" into the Amargosa Valley and at one point ran power poles up to Hank Record's property line. In good frontier fashion, the poles were sawed down; no one ever found out who did it (Records, 1987).

The new cooperative soon found itself buried in litigation initiated by the Nevada Power Company and by Southern California Edison, which had interests on the California side of the state line in the Amargosa and Pahrump valleys (Records, 1987).

The cooperative was able to fend off the lawsuits and spiteful activities of the Nevada Power Company, but one last hurdle remained. Residents had assumed that once lines were constructed, power would be available; they were disconcerted to learn that Hoover Dam had

no excess power to sell. A trip to Washington and a meeting with Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall eventually broke a bureaucratic logjam, and 10,000 kilowatts were allocated from the Davis Dam on the Colorado River near Bullhead City, Arizona. This power was traded to a power company nearer to the Davis Dam for 10,000 kilowatts of that company's allocation from Hoover Dam. In October 1962, contracts were let for the construction of 120 miles of double-pole transmission lines. The Nevada Power Company tried to make construction of these lines difficult, but Roland Wiley, an attorney and longtime Pahrump Valley resident, was able to assist the co-op members in being able to run the lines across public domain land (Wiley, 1988). The transmission lines, now a familiar part of the southern Nevada landscape, run from Henderson over the Spring Mountains through the Pahrump Valley to the Amargosa Valley, with two substations, one in Pahrump and one in Lathrop Wells (Sternberg, 1986:6).

On March 16, 1963, the 120-mile transmission line and 300 miles of distribution lines were energized. A week later a barbecue dinner was held in Pahrump to celebrate the occasion (Sternberg, 1986:7). Later in 1963, another REA loan was obtained to extend the lines on to Beatty and Rhyolite and eventually up Oasis Valley to Sarcobatus Flats and on to Scotty's Castle across the California line (Sternberg, 1986:7). In 1965, the Amargosa Valley Electric Cooperative and the White Mountain Electric Cooperative merged, forming the Valley Electric Association, Inc., a name change that reflects the utility's service to several large valleys in the region (Sternberg, 1986:10). (When the Amargosa Valley Electric Cooperative and the Pahrump Utility Company merged, they had first used the name Amargosa Valley Electric Cooperative; the later change was largely instigated by Elmer Bowman [Records, 1987].) By 1974, irrigation power needs accounted for 35 percent of the cooperative's income; residential use 32 percent; and small commercial usage 19 percent. Since 1970, the percentage of income from residential users has risen steadily (M. Hafen, 1976:9).

### Telephone Service Reaches the Valley

For years the nearest phone for Pahrump Valley residents was located in Shoshone, California. Although area residents had approached Nevada Bell many times to request the installation of telephone service, the answer only mimicked Nevada Power's response regarding electricity. In 1964, the Amargosa Valley Power Cooperative (Valley Electric Association) obtained a loan commitment from the REA to construct a telephone system in Pahrump. Word of the loan commitment from REA spread quickly, and the valley was soon inundated with public relations experts from Nevada Bell attempting to convince residents that Nevada Bell could do a better job of installing and operating a telephone system than could the co-op (M. Hafen, 1988a). The telephone company representative circulated petitions and letters of intent that people were asked to sign, indicating they would rather go with Nevada Bell than with the cooperative. The telephone company then took the petitions to the State Public Service Commission as evidence that the public in Pahrump favored them. Nevada Bell received Public Service Commission approval to construct a telephone system in Pahrump.

The Board of Directors of the Valley Electric Association then cancelled their REA loan application, but it was the REA loan commitment that had forced Nevada Bell to move. The first telephone system Nevada Bell installed in Pahrump was an old four-digit system that had been removed from Battle Mountain, Nevada. There were a total of 76 subscribers listed in the first

telephone book, dated March 6, 1965, which has become a collector's item among longtime valley residents. Though the first system was not terribly reliable, there was widespread agreement that it was much better than nothing. Pahrump residents had little trouble in making calls out of the valley with the first system, but there were problems with incoming calls. Because each subscriber only had a four-digit number, it was necessary to go through an operator, and it took some convincing on the part of the caller before the operator would believe that a four-digit number would work. As Tim Hafen pointed out, the operator, when calling into Pahrump, used an 836 prefix; but this prefix was not published. The four-digit system lasted a few years. By 1989, three updated systems had been installed, and each time the phone company had underestimated growth in the valley (M. Hafen, 1988a). The telephone system in operation in the Pahrump Valley in 1989 was the equivalent of any in the United States.

### Subdivision Begins in Pahrump

With plenty of land and water, clean air, and a pollution-free environment, as well as high-quality paved roads, reasonably priced electric power, and telephone service, the stage finally was set for Pahrump to fulfill its destiny by beginning to become a city. A final necessary step was for the large land holdings to be divided into smaller parcels that buyers could purchase to construct homes on. The first serious subdivision effort in Pahrump Valley began in about 1959 or 1960 on the valley's west side. A group of Los Angeles lawyers, including a man named Corbin, purchased large parcels on the west side of the valley, subdivided the land on paper, and filed maps with Nye County. These lots were sold for \$495 an acre with \$50 down and \$50 a month. They were sold primarily through Stars and Stripes, a magazine for servicemen. These subdivisions were called Charleston Park Ranchos and Cal-Vegas Ranchos, Units 1-6, and they sold by the hundreds. Many people purchased these lots for their retirement. When the new owners came to the valley and saw their investments, some were shocked at the desolate character of the area and others were delighted, exclaiming it was just what they wanted. Some of the original purchasers of these lots still resided there in 1989. These lots are located on both sides of Barney Road (Ford, 1988).

During the same period, two brothers, Warren and Eddie Lewis, purchased land on the west side and subdivided it, calling it Golden Spring Ranches; but they never sold a single lot. Jim Lawrence subdivided about 160 acres on Leslie Street (Ford, 1988). Stanley Ford subdivided 160 acres that he had obtained through trades for drilling wells. He sold eight lots for \$100 down, \$25 a month, and 5 percent interest (Ford, 1988). Ford's was some of the first subdivided land in the valley onto which people moved shortly after their purchase. Most of these lots were sold to people who worked and commuted daily to the Nevada Test Site; they kept horses on their property. Al Bells, in partnership with a physician, also subdivided land on the west side (Ford, 1988).

Subdivision during this period, until about 1970, was confined to the west side of the valley because the good farmland was on the east side. On the west side, the soil was clay and there were no artesian wells. A few people farmed there, but farming was always on a small scale (Ford, 1988).

The first person to subdivide on the east side of the valley was Jim Raycraft, in the area of West, East, Center, and Wilson streets. He subdivided 80 acres into 1-acre lots, minus the area used for the road. In 1961, he charged \$250 for these lots, at the same time that a person could buy 40 acres for \$60 an acre. The above summarizes much of the subdividing that took place prior to 1970 (Ford, 1988).

In 1970 Preferred Equities purchased the 10,000 acres remaining in the Pahrump Ranch from Walt Williams and his partner. Preferred Equities was a land development company owned by Leonard Rosen and his family. Though sometimes controversial, Leonard Rosen and his brother Jack (who had died a year earlier in 1969), were remarkable figures in the annals of American business. The Rosen family were Jews who had fled the pogroms of Russia and had immigrated to the United States around the turn of the century (Sterling and Venze, 1988). Leonard was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. Following his father's death when Leonard was 12, he quit school and learned to live by his wits, always scrambling for a dollar. For a time he was a professional boxer, but he was never terribly successful and was humorously referred to as "Canvasback" by family members. As a young man he worked in carnivals and learned to sell gadgets and patent medicines. It was in the carnivals that he honed his natural abilities for sales and learned to understand people, their motives, and desires and what drove them to make purchases. Those who knew Rosen best say that he was a natural salesman, a master at marketing, and a genius at promotion. Leonard Rosen died in 1987 at the age of 72 (Sterling and Venze, 1988).

About the time of World War II, Rosen, his brother Jack, and other family members established an installment-buying business in Baltimore, Maryland, which they operated until the late 1940s. About 1950, they developed the first shampoo that incorporated and promoted lanolin as a key ingredient. They sold the installment business and began marketing Charles Antell Formula Number 9 as well as vitamins especially formulated for children. The Rosens used television in innovative ways to market these products when the medium was in its infancy (Sterling and Venze, 1988).

In 1950 Leonard Rosen and his wife took a trip to the west coast and stopped off in Las Vegas. Rosen was immediately smitten by the desert, its wide open spaces, and stark, natural beauty. They stayed at the Desert Inn and purchased a block of land from its proprietor, Wilbur Clark. Although it was Rosen's intention to become involved in business in Las Vegas at that time, his wife's unexpected pregnancy prevented such a move. Yet the Rosens were sufficiently enchanted by the desert to name the baby girl Sandy in honor of the desert sands of Las Vegas. As Linda Rosen Sterling, another Rosen daughter, said, quoting her father, "Instead of sand, we got Sandy" (Sterling and Venze, 1988). Rosen never forgot Las Vegas and in the back of his mind seemed always to have planned to return.

Rosen had always wanted to build an ideal community, one that was both aesthetically pleasing and designed to meet the needs of its residents as effectively as possible. In the late 1930s, as a young man, he had purchased property on the eastern seaboard and had planned to build an ideal community around a furniture factory. These plans never materialized, but Rosen did not forget his dream.

In the middle 1950s, he and his family sold the shampoo and vitamin business. With money made from this sale he purchased a large parcel of swamp land on the west coast of Florida. It was here that he planned to build his ideal community. The swamp was dredged and

canals constructed, and they began selling the former swamp land. The Gulf America Corporation was formed to handle the endeavor. Although there were many setbacks and Rosen was often criticized, what emerged was the town of Cape Coral, Florida, which Time Magazine designated one of the top ten cities in the United States (Sterling and Venze, 1988).

Rosen has been described as a charismatic figure who never walked into a room without being noticed. He possessed little formal education, but was bright, a voracious reader, iconoclastic, and sometimes given to playing by his own rules. He was confident that he could sell anything. This sales ability enabled him and his brother Jack to transform a Florida swamp into a town. In doing so, they developed many innovative real estate sales techniques, which are still standard in the industry throughout the country (Sterling and Venze, 1988).

Following the sale of the Gulf America Corporation, Rosen decided to return to Nevada. He recognized that the sunbelt of the United States had great potential for population growth and that Las Vegas was a city with enormous potential. He knew that most of southern Nevada was owned by the federal government and that any development was constrained by the availability of water. He knew also that land in the Las Vegas Valley was far too expensive to undergo the kind of development he had accomplished in Florida and which he had in mind for Nevada (Sterling and Venze, 1988).

Once in Las Vegas, he rented an airplane, and with his engineer, he flew over the southern Nevada area taking note of oasis-like locations where development would be possible. The Pahrump Valley, with its vast land resources and abundant water, was his natural choice.

In 1970, Preferred Equities purchased the Pahrump Ranch from Walt Williams for \$3.5 million on a seven-year contract (Williams, 1988). The corporation began to develop the big Pahrump Ranch almost immediately. Large numbers of lots were laid out, streets were constructed, and an active sales program undertaken under the direction of Jack Soules. Lots were sold over the next fifteen years, with the focus of sales activity in Las Vegas. Many who purchased lots from Preferred Equities resided in the immediate area, but most were tourists who came to Las Vegas from other states. Preferred Equities immediately became the leading force in the valley for the development of Pahrump into a modern community. Through the years the company acquired additional large properties in the valley, including several large acreages at the north end. Gradually the Pahrump Ranch was withdrawn from agricultural production as were additional farm properties that the company purchased. Loss of the Pahrump ranches' productive capacity in cotton meant an eventual end to the operation of the cotton gin, although the gin continued to operate for a number of years after cotton production was stopped on the Pahrump Ranch (Blosser, 1988).

A shift of the Pahrump Ranch from farming to land sales served as a catalyst, and other land owners in the valley soon followed suit. Farmers like Ted Blosser and Tim Hafen subdivided parts of their properties not then under cultivation, and though they continued farming after subdividing, they recognized that the future of the valley was not in farming, but in land development. By 1976, even the College of Agriculture at the University of Nevada had gotten on the bandwagon through the publication of a booklet by its Cooperative Extension Service entitled "Homesite Development in Pahrump Valley." The booklet outlines the kinds of tasks that a prospective home builder in the valley would need to consider, including soil testing and preparation, the kinds of trees and shrubs to plant, and factors to consider when planting a garden. As far back as 1970, the Las Vegas Sun ran an article on Cal-Vada's activities in the

valley, suggesting that a city of 50,000 might one day exist there (Wade, 1970). In 1974, an article appeared in the New York Times describing the enthusiasm and growth taking place in Pahrump (Nordheimer, 1974). Tim Hafen's prediction in 1987 of 20,000 residents in the Pahrump Valley by 1997 seems very realistic if current growth rates continue (Manning, 1987). Pahrump's current estimated population of 7,000 has more than doubled since 1980.

The role that air conditioning played in Pahrump's growth should not be overlooked. Air conditioning in the U.S. became common in offices and factories in the 1930s, but it was not until after World War II that it became economically feasible for home use (Friedman, 1984). It is used in virtually all homes in the valley during the summer. Without it, Pahrump, as well as most of the cities located in the sunbelt, would be much less attractive during the summer months.

## Turf Farming

Beginning in the late 1960s a new agricultural product began to be produced in Pahrump. Johnnie Harrell and Tom Jaegger purchased a section of land. On his half, Jaegger raised registered Black Angus cattle and alfalfa. Harrell went a different route, opting for alfalfa and lawn sod (Vincent, 1968a). In 1968 Harrell had 20 acres of hybrid Bermuda turf under cultivation. The sod takes hard wear and is drought resistant, and Harrell got two crops a year from each plot. In 1988, there were two sod farms in Pahrump—one known as Fountain Green Turf owned by Mark Bowman, who had 50 acres in turf, and the other a 140-acre operation off West Homestead Road known as Pacific Sod. Both operations produce for the Las Vegas homebuilding market as well as for purchasers from as far away as San Francisco (Peterson, 1988:12).

## Pahrump's Modern Indians

Not many Native Americans remain in the Pahrump Valley; the population is very small in comparison to former times. In 1988, there were 33 Native Americans (fourteen households) living in the Pahrump Valley and outlying areas (Cultural Resources Consultants, 1988:8-10). Many are Southern Paiute; most of the remaining are Shoshone. Descendants of Chief Tecopa (Brown and Arnold, 1988) and Whispering Ben (Lynch, 1988) still reside in the valley. Although they are integrated into white society in many ways, individuals do make an effort to preserve aspects of their Indian identity and vestiges of their earlier culture. Many families still pick pine nuts in the fall and gather other wild foods in season, including mesquite beans, squaw berries, squaw cabbage, and wild grapes (Lynch, 1988). Some still speak the native language, which is now being studied and preserved by researchers from the University of Nevada at Reno (Lynch, 1988). For the most part, middle-aged Native Americans who speak Southern Paiute are those who did not go to Indian school where their native language was forbidden. Many older Pahrump Indians were educated in Indian schools at Stewart, Nevada, and Riverside, California. They view with great sadness the authoritarianism and the schools' systematic attempts to wipe out their Indian culture, including the forbidding of Indian children to speak in their native

languages. Younger Indians are merging more easily into the economic mainstream of American life (Brown and Arnold, 1988).

## Mexican-Americans in the Pahrump Valley

There were no Mexican-Americans in substantial numbers living in the Pahrump Valley prior to the cotton boom beginning about 1950. During the early 1950s a number of valley ranchers attempted to work with Mexican-American labor coming from California, but this was not especially successful (Williams, 1988). After Walt Williams' purchase of the Pahrump Ranch in 1957, Mexican-Americans from Texas and Mexico found their way into the valley in relatively large numbers as laborers in the cotton fields. Walt Williams had previous experience with Bracero program laborers from Mexico, and he took the lead in assisting other valley farmers to obtain labor from this source. Mexican Bracero laborers were excellent workers who were accustomed to the Pahrump Valley climate, and they were used for several years until the Bracero program was discontinued. A number of workers from Mexico, as well as Texas, found their way into the valley, however. Often Mexican laborers brought their families with them or sent for them not long after arriving. Word of jobs in Pahrump was obtained by prospective immigrants to the valley through word-of-mouth from relatives and friends. A number of families of Mexican descent settled in the valley in this way and purchased property, built homes, and raised families. Over the years, these residents have become thoroughly integrated into the Pahrump community and are highly respected by their neighbors for their hard work and high moral standards (M. Hafen, 1988a). As farming in the Pahrump community has ebbed, Mexican-American families have shifted to other occupations, although some remain in farming (Pallan, 1988).

## The Future of the Valley

No one can predict with certainty the destiny of the Pahrump Valley—or any community. We have no way of knowing what generations 250 or 500 years from now will be like, what technology they will possess, what their attitudes toward life and the land will be. Yet the history of a community, the study of its past, should provide some idea of where it is heading in the short term—say, the next 50 or 100 years.

The history of the Pahrump Valley since the white man took possession of it from the Indians indicates that although the valley had plenty of good farmland and water, it was never very successful economically. Its isolation and distance to markets retarded full development. The only period of agricultural prosperity—in the 1950s and 1960s (with cotton and, to a lesser extent, with alfalfa)—was brief.

Given the geography of the American West and the relative scarcity of water and privately owned land, the Pahrump Valley is more likely to be a small city than an agricultural community. As an urban community, it can provide the goods and services offered by many small sunbelt cities. Pahrump will be particularly attractive to retirees and to those who prefer a quiet lifestyle with plenty of open space, a salubrious climate, and clean air and water. Moreover, its land prices are virtually unbeatable when compared to similar places in the

United States. It will also be attractive to those who are employed in the increasingly congested Las Vegas Valley and who prefer to commute to a home in the Pahrump Valley, using the driving time to listen to music, enjoy the scenery, or organize their thoughts (Becker, 1988). Pahrump is not a city yet, but it is very likely to be one.

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